FICTIONS OF THE INNER LIFE

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FICTIONS OF THE INNER LIFE

Religious Literature and Formation of the Self

in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

by

Ineke van 't Spijker

BREPOLS

Printed in the E.U. on acid-free paper.

Contents

Preface

Space and time…, and life and death, heaven and hell, day and night, are human images imposed like form upon the void

<div align="right">Richard Ellmann</div>

L ike twelfth-century monks moulding themselves by excision of vices and idle cogitations, writing this book was very much an exercise in excision and concentration. Conceiving of it as part of an integral project was rewarding—looking at a medieval cathedral or a modern painting, watching a film, or reading a novel, or just any article in a daily paper, would form the inevitable digressions and provoke thoughts about human self-perceptions. But in the end it was only by concentration on four medieval authors that a book could materialize. As its subject is as elusive as the monastic reader's goal, the monk's endless alternating between diffidence and confidence—the first usually more prominent—also often seemed familiar. If unlike a monk, who is never supposed to consider his work as finished, I have finished this book, I am presented with a welcome opportunity to acknowledge my debts to many people and thank them.

Abbreviations

CCSL: Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954–)

CCCM: Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Medievalis (Turnhout: Brepols, 1966–)

CSEL: Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1866–)

PL: *Patrologiae cursus completus ... Series Latina*, ed. by J. P. Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1841–1864)

SAO: *S. Anselmi Cantuarensi Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, ed. by Franciscus Salesius Schmitt, 6 vols (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1968, facsimile reprint of the first edn, Seckau, Rome, Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1938–1961)

SBO: *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. by J. Leclercq, C. H. Talbot, H. M. Rochais, 8 vols (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957–1977)

SC: Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1941–)

For most of the translations of biblical texts into English I have used the New Revised Standard Version. In some cases (where it seemed to do more justice to the Latin) I have used the Authorized Version (AV) and I have indicated this in the text.

Introduction

The Delphic adage, 'know yourself', was a recurring theme in twelfth-century religious literature. Hugh of Saint-Victor used it in the first chapter of his *Didascalicon*.[1] It was the subtitle of Abelard's *Ethica*. It has long been recognized by historians as a sign of the 'discovery of the individual' in the twelfth century. The quest for self-knowledge, for knowledge of one's inner self that is, and the emphasis on one's own experience, are seen as signs of this growing sense of individuality. Originating as a reaction of medievalists to the claims of Renaissance historians, this 'discovery of the individual' has been qualified since then. In the first place, there is no individual in a modern sense, with its sense of uniqueness and its goal of self-fulfilment. Secondly, the almost exclusive attention on religion as the field where, if not individuality, at least self-awareness develops, has come under attack. Historians have pleaded an enlargement of the field where an individual awareness can be seen: not only among the religious and intellectual elite, where individualism takes a religious, philosophical, or literary form, but also among other social groups and societies.[2]

However one qualifies medieval individualism, the emphasis on self-knowledge and experience was a sign of a long recognized process of interiorization in religious

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[1] Hugh of Saint-Victor, *Didascalicon* 1.1, in *Hugonis de Sancto Victore Didascalicon: De Studio Legendi*, ed. by Charles Henri Buttimer, Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Latin, X (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1939), p. 4. On the Delphic precept see Pierre Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même de Socrate à Saint Bernard*, 3 vols (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1974–75).

[2] See Aaron Gurevich, *The Origins of European Individualism*, trans. by Katharina Judelson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995). William Miller has drawn attention to individual consciousness in Icelandic saga-society: William Ian Miller, 'Deep Inner Lives: Individualism and People of Honour', *History of Political Thought*, 16 (1995), 190–207.

communities. One can think of Anselm's famous call, at the beginning of his *Proslogion*, to enter for a moment the inner chamber of the mind, to seek God.[3] This interiorization is seen as part of broader changes in religion, away from the liturgical, ritual devotions of the earlier Middle Ages, as they were embodied in Benedictine monasticism. The Benedictine monopoly made way for a variety of monastic and canonical forms. Behind these changes lay, as Giles Constable has argued, 'a major reassessment of the nature of religious life and of the ideal of Christian perfection'.[4] One manifestation of this reassessment was a change in the recruitment patterns of monasteries. The religious community no longer consisted, for the most part, of people who had entered the monastery as children—*oblati*—and had been educated in isolation from the outside world. More and more people entered the community after conversion at a later age.[5] One can think of Bernard of Clairvaux and his companions at the time of their entry into Cîteaux. Others felt the need to live in a stricter community. Romuald was one of the earliest examples of a convert who combined the traditional and the novel forms in his life. Born in Ravenna in the mid-tenth century, Romuald had entered a monastery to serve penance, after having witnessed his father kill a kinsman in a duel, but he thought the way of life too lenient and became a hermit. The monk or canon who entered the community had taken his own decision. In this sense, he was an 'individual', whatever the importance of the establishment he entered and the model he chose to follow by entering a specific community.[6] Contemporary authors show an awareness

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[3] Anselmus, *Proslogion* 1, in *S. Anselmi Cantuarensi Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, ed. by Franciscus Salesius Schmitt, 6 vols (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1968, facsimile reprint of the first edn, Seckau, Rome, Edinburgh 1938–1961) I, 89–122 (p. 97, l. 7).

[4] Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 169.

[5] See Herbert Grundmann, 'Adelsbekehrungen im Hochmittelalter. Conversi und nutriti im Kloster' in *Adel und Kirche. Gerd Tellenbach zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Josef Fleckenstein and Karl Schmid (Freiburg: Herder, 1968), pp. 325–345; Joachim Wollasch, 'Parenté noble et monachisme réformateur. Observations sur les "conversions" et la vie monastique aux XIe et XIIe siècles', *Revue historique*, 264 (1980), 3–24. See also Constable, *Reformation*, pp. 100–101; and Joseph H. Lynch, 'Monastic Recruitment in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: Some Social and Economic Considerations', *American Benedictine Review*, 26 (1975), 425–447.

[6] Carolyne Walker Bynum, 'Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?', in Carolyne Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 82–109, emphasizes the importance of group and model. See also the reaction of Colin Morris to Bynum's critique of his *The Discovery of the Individual: 1050–1200*, Medieval Acadamy Reprints for Teaching, 19 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), in Colin Morris, 'Individualism in Twelfth-Century Religion: Some Further Reflections', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 31 (1980), 195–206.

of this possibility of choice. Although there were fierce debates about what was the right way of living, some writers valued this possibility of choice as something positive.[7] But whatever choice was made, entering the monastery was only the first step of one's *conversio*. One purpose of the treatises, sermons, and meditations which abound in such large numbers in this period, was to introduce the new population, with its worldly experiences, into the religious life; to teach them what this life was about, its goal and how to reach it. In these treatises one sees an emphasis on the 'inner man', and it is on the inner life that their pedagogy focuses. This focus on the inner life is only one aspect of a widely felt desire for a more personal relationship with God, which inspired many sudden conversions, or transitions from a traditional to a more radical way of monastic life: in short, of an aspiration to return to the 'life of the early church' (the *vita ecclesiae primitivae*) and the 'life of the apostles' (the *vita apostolica*). Physical practices, from retreating into solitude to walking barefoot, demonstrate the wish to imitate the life of Christ and the apostles and to return to the life of the pure Church, as described in the Acts of the Apostles. The explorations of the inner life are perhaps the most articulate expressions of the general search for a direct relationship with God. In the literature on the spirituality of the eleventh and twelfth centuries the trend towards inwardness, together with self-knowledge and the importance of the idea of man as made 'in the image and likeness of God', has long been seen as a defining element.[8] However, the meaning of 'inwardness' has too often been taken for granted.

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[7] On the twelfth-century debates see Constable, *Reformation*, pp. 44–87. One of the finest expressions of a positive approach to diversity is the *Libellus de diversis ordinibus et professionibus qui sunt in aecclesia*, ed. and trans. by G. Constable and B. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

[8] On the spirituality of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, see for instance M.-D. Chenu, 'Moines, clercs, laïcs au carrefour de la vie évangélique' and 'Le Réveil évangélique', in *La Théologie au douzième siècle* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1957), pp. 252–273 and pp. 225–251 respectively. These essays have been translated as 'The Evangelical Awakening' and 'Monks, Canons and Laymen in Search of the Apostolic Life' in M.-D. Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, ed. and trans. by Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little, Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching, 37 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 239–269 and pp. 202–238 respectively. See also Constable, *Reformation*; many articles by Ch. Dereine, for example 'La "vita apostolica" dans l'ordre canonial du IXe au XIe siècles', *Revue Mabillon*, 51 (1961), 47–53; Henrietta Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism. A Study of Religious Communities in Western Europe, 1000–1150* (London: Macmillan Press, 1984); Giovanni Miccoli, 'Ecclesiae primitivae forma' in: *Chiesa gregoriana. Ricerche sulla riforma del secolo XI* (Florence: La nuova Italia, 1966), pp. 225–303; Glenn Olsen, 'The Idea of the "Ecclesia Primitiva" in the Writings of Twelfth-Century Canonists', *Traditio*, 25 (1969), 61–68. For further literature see I. van ´t Spijker, *Als door een speciaal stempel. Traditie en*

Interiority, which figures prominently in the writings to be examined here, is no self-subsistent aspect of human existence with an unchanging meaning, which can emerge in some historical circumstances and disappear in others.[9] This notion gives expression to a specific understanding of what a human being is. For modern man, interiority has come to suggest depth and mysteriousness, but also something investigable and malleable.[10] There is also a suggestion that the more detailed the description of the inner self, the deeper the inner life is.[11]

However, late antique philosophers, for example, entertained a different notion of interiority. Pierre Hadot has shown how, for them, the interior is an interior object, to be cultivated in order to transcend one's individuality in the end.[12] The sense of an inner self is present in Jewish scripture, especially in the Psalms.[13] From the beginning of the Christian tradition, a sense of a personal self had also been central. This was connected to a sense of interiority, as in Paul's 'inward man' (II Corinthians 4. 16). In the early Middle Ages, the notion of an inner life had not disappeared, yet it was not in the foreground of reflection about the monk's life, where the monk was seen as acting a role in a ritualized and liturgified, ongoing spiritual warfare for the benefit of all society.[14] The eleventh and twelfth centuries returned to the late antique tradition. The monasticism of this period was

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vernieuwing in heiligenlevens uit Noordwest-Frankrijk (1050–1150) (Hilversum: Verloren, 1990), especially Chapter 6.

[9] Compare this with what the Germans call the *Emergenzthese*, which supposes that the idea of individuality emerged at a certain moment. See, for example, Martin Schwab, 'Einzelding und Selbsterzeugung', in *Individualität*, ed. by Manfred Frank and Anselm Haverkamp, Poetik und Hermeneutik, XIII (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1988), pp. 35–75 (p. 74).

[10] Michael Carrithers, 'An Alternative Social History of the Self', in *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History*, ed. by Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins, and Steven Lukes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 234–256 (p. 242).

[11] Miller, 'Deep Inner Lives', p. 196.

[12] Pierre Hadot, 'Reflections on the Notion of the "Cultivation of the Self"', in *Michel Foucault Philosopher*, trans. by Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), pp. 225–232. See also Pierre Hadot, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*, 2nd rev. edn (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1987).

[13] See in this context Fritz Stolz, 'From the Paradigm of Lament and Hearing to the Conversion Paradigm', in *Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions*, ed. by Jan Assmann and Guy G. Stroumsma, Studies in the History of Religions, 83 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 9–29. Many articles in this book are relevant to the topic of interiority. See also *Self, Soul and Body in Religious Experience*, ed. by A. I. Baumgarten, J. Assmann, G. G. Stroumsma, Studies in the History of Religions, 78 (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

[14] R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 223–230.

characterized by a revival of early Christian eremitical ideals and of the ideal of the apostolic life. Cassian transmitted the tradition of the desert (where the notions of late antiquity described by Hadot had been influential), and with it the psychology contained in its teaching about virtues and vices. Augustine in particular had developed the notion of the *homo interior*.[15] The eleventh and twelfth centuries were the heirs to his exploration of the inner life, and to those of other patristic authors. The notion of interiority was again emphasized. But the heritage of late antiquity did not remain unchanged. On the one hand, the ritual element of the earlier Middle Ages did not disappear, but was absorbed into the greater interiority. On the other hand, this religiosity of interiority, affectivity and experience lent itself just as much to processes of stylization and modelling as the earlier more ritual devotions had done. The notion of interiority was often expressly connected with the idea of composition, or acting. The reader was to build 'an inner ark', or to enact in his heart a story of, for example, crossing a desert.

As these few lines illustrate, it may be misleading to use modern concepts of the individual, person, experience or interiority, to indicate what medieval authors were signifying. It is difficult to articulate the differences and to describe with a modern vocabulary a different conceptual structure.[16] Even when medieval authors use words such as 'self' or 'inner man', our understanding of what they mean is inevitably heavily contaminated by modern meanings.

In order to understand the 'inward turn' of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the specific meaning of inwardness in this period, this book attempts an exploration of the notions of the 'inner man' and of 'composing' the inner life through four influential authors from the period: Peter Damian, Hugh of Saint-Victor, Richard of Saint-Victor and William of Saint-Thierry. I shall investigate the role of these notions in their pedagogy, in the context of the contemporary monastic and canonical environment and its age-old theological, literary and exegetical traditions. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, experience and interiority are given shape on the basis of these traditions and their articulation is determined by the use the authors make of them. By staying close to the words used by the authors and to their texts, we may avoid anachronistic notions that have developed in the process towards a modern sense of individuality, but which may have been foreign to medieval conceptualizing. Thus, for example, the word *experientia* does not necessarily have the same connotations of irreducible authenticity and subjectivity as its modern counterpart, but is closely connected to *cogitatio*, and *affectus*. *Cogitatio* is thinking, but framed within an elaborate network of mental activities. Words like

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[15] See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 127–142; Phillip Carey, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[16] On this difficulty see Timothy J. Reiss, *The Discourse of Modernism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 46.

affectus, affectio, afficere, sentire, sensus refer to what we call emotion, feeling and perception, but their usage points to a different perception of emotional life than ours.[17] It is only by showing the usage of these words that we can try to achieve an understanding of their meaning. That is one reason for the many quotations which accompany my analysis of the works of these four authors, as presented in the following chapters. They often speak of *homo interior*, and I shall attempt to demonstrate what this means. It may, however, be useful to first ascertain what *homo interior* does not mean.

Although later medieval religiosity was indebted to the twelfth century, the concept of the 'inner man' on which I concentrate here, is not the same as that of the later Middle Ages.[18] The *homo interior* of the eleventh- and twelfth-century religious communities was different from the individual fashioned in the sixteenth century by Ignatius through his *Exercitia*, and is quite unlike the autonomous, self-fashioning individual imagined by Burckhardt. He was not like Descartes' 'disengaged subject', or like Montaigne's self-scrutinizing inner man or Cervantes' Knight of the Sad Countenance, whose outward adventures establish the novelistic complement to the philosophical project of modernity's subjectivity.[19] Psychology as an academic discipline has deeply influenced our way of perceiving ourselves, and

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[17] In the process of establishing the meaning of these words in their context, whenever I have translated them I have often used the English words which are derived from them: 'affect' or 'affection' and 'sense' rather than 'feeling', sense sometimes as sense-organ, or what is perceived by it. This does not always make for the most elegant reading, but, I hope, goes some way towards avoiding contamination with modern meanings. On the nineteenth-century origins of 'the emotions' as a psychological category, see Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[18] See Giles Constable, 'Twelfth-Century Spirituality and the Late Middle Ages', in Giles Constable, *Religious Life and Thought* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1979), XV, first published in *Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 5, Proceedings of the Southeastern Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Summer 1969, ed. by O. B. Hardison, Jr (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), pp. 27–60. On the late medieval construction of the religious self in circles of the *Devotio Moderna*, see P. Bange, *Spiegels der Christenen: Zelfreflectie en ideaalbeeld in laat-middeleeuwse moralistisch-didaktische traktaten* (Nijmegen: Centrum voor Middeleeuwse Studies, Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, 1986); L. Breure, *Doodsbeleving en levenshouding: Een historisch-psychologische studie betreffende de Moderne Devotie in het IJsselgebied in de 14e en 15e eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1987); see also the work of Anton G. Weiler, for example 'De constructie van het zelf bij Geert Grote' in *Serta Devota in memoriam Guillielmi Lourdaux*, ed. by Werner Verbeke and others, 2 vols, Mediaevalia Lovanensia Series I, Studia, XX (Leuven: University Press Leuven, 1992), I: Devotio Windeshemensis, pp. 225–239.

[19] See, for example, Taylor, *Sources of the Self*; Anthony J. Cascardi, *The Subject of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

of how we think of human beings in general, but the *homo interior* reflects conceptions which are different from Freud's conceptions of the psyche, and from other twentieth-century ways of looking at the human being which we take for granted. Moreover, for all their solutions to the problem of the relation between soul and body, the authors whose works are considered here would definitely not recognize themselves as the object of modern investigations of the 'mind' or of 'consciousness'.

Apart from these chronologically determined delineations, the monastic context and tradition in the eleventh and twelfth centuries forms a distinguishing factor in the content of the interiority investigated here. Communities of monks and regular canons who followed a monastic way of life, were not as much closed off from the world as some of their ideals pretend, but in their self-conception and in the development of their notions about the inner man, a hermetic quality—a quality of exclusiveness—is apparent.[20] The *homo interior* of monks and canons differs from twelfth-century concepts that were developed in theological–philosophical debates, about the Trinity, for instance, or about a *principium individuationis*. Discussions about the *persona* of Christ, or about what makes things individual may have contributed to the conceptual apparatus required for 'thinking the individual'.[21] The monastic *homo interior* is composed, or composes himself, largely outside these definitions originating in the milieu of the schools. The monk or canon is part of a community which is perceived as exclusive and closed off from the outside world, on his way to the heavenly homeland. From a broader social point of view, this exclusivity is an optical illusion, but this illusion determines their self-perceptions.

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[20] This hermetism is unmistakable in Bernard of Clairvaux: see M. B. Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought: Broken Dreams* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

[21] The discourse of the jurists was important as well. See Alain Boureau, 'Droit et théologie au XIIIe siècle', *Annales Économies Sociétés Civilisations*, 47 (1992), 1113–1125. Jean-Claude Schmitt shows how new 'techniques langagières' were developed through the practice of confession, which encouraged an 'expression de moi': see Jean-Claude Schmitt 'La "Découverte de l'individu": Une Fiction historiographique?' in *La Fabrique, la figure et la feinte. Fictions et statuts des fictions en psychologie*, ed. by Paul Mengal and Françoise Parot (Paris: Sciences en Situation, 1989), pp. 213–236. In the thirteenth century these discussions would ramify into the different visions, of , for example, the Franciscans and the Dominicans. Alexander of Hales, speaking of the Trinity, identified Christ as being an *individuum*, *subjectum* and *persona*: the first relates to the field of logic, the second to nature, the third to the moral level. See T. Kobusch, *Die Entdeckung der Person. Metaphysik der Freiheit und modernes Menschenbild* (Freiburg: Herder, 1993), p. 23, 28. See also *Individuum und Individualität im Mittelalter*, ed. by Jan A. Aertsen and Andreas Speer, Miscellanea Mediaevalia: Veröffentlichungen des Thomas-Instituts der Universität zu Köln, 24 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996); Edouard-Henri Wéber, *La Personne au XIIIe siècle. L'Avènement chez les maîtres parisiens de l'acception moderne de l'homme*, Bibliothèque Thomiste, 46 (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1991).

Aside from scholastic developments, the development of interiority is illustrated by other non-monastic aspects of twelfth-century culture. In his *L'Éveil de la Conscience*, Chenu points to the importance of Abelard's ethic of intention, and his discovery of the subject.[22] In the twelfth-century romance a distinct form of self-awareness and interiority developed.[23] Recently Sarah Spence has argued for the contribution of vernacular literature to the development of self, in its acceptance and denial of Latin tradition.[24] It could do so, she suggests, because it was not bound into a 'scriptural mold', and the writers of vernacular texts, by implication, did not strive toward the transcendent one—a striving which makes the existence of a self impossible. I would maintain that the great plasticity of the Latin tradition did allow the development of a distinct self-awareness, even in the religious domain, with its enduring presence of a transcendent Being. Before the reformations of the sixteenth century, this transcendence did not imply a total gap or opposition between transcendence and humanity. The two are interrelated on a more intimate level: the transcendent is drawn into the human, and vice versa, rather than constituting an absoluteness which crushes humanity. Luther's 'man who does not want God to be God' contrasts with medieval ideas about human *capacitas* for the divine.

The monastic author, although his notion of interiority differs on important points from their ideas on man as a microcosmos, shares this sense of *capacitas* with the Platonizing cosmologists of the 'School of Chartres'. The Victorines in particular

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[22] M.-D. Chenu, *L'Éveil de la conscience dans la civilisation médiévale* (Montréal: Institut d'Études Médiévales; Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1969). His definitions of conscience and of interiority are rather coloured by twentieth-century psychology, see for example, pp. 11–12: 'Par *conscience*, nous entendons ici, selon toute la compréhension du terme, enregistrée dans le langage même, la totalité des phénomènes psychologiques et moraux, à la fois très divers et continûment entrelacés, tels qu'ils se manifestent non seulement dans la succession, la mobilité, la complexité de nos actes, mais aussi dans leur source vive, au-delà même du visible, du mesurable, de l'analysable, au niveau de ce que nous appelons aujourd'hui le subconscient, fécondant comme un fleuve souterrain la moindre de nos actions comme nos plus grands desseins. […] Nous parlerons de l'*intériorité* comme qualité caractéristique de nos opérations humaines: intériorité de nous-mêmes à nous-mêmes, non seulement dans la lucidité par laquelle nous rationalisons nos spontanéités, mais déjà le réflexe qui provoque en nous, individus et collectivités, cette découverte enivrante que ne résorbera jamais la réflexion.'

[23] Robert W. Hanning, *The Individual in Twelfth-Century Romance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

[24] See Sarah Spence, *Texts and the Self in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 14. Walter Ullmann, *The Individual and Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), p. 106, also claimed that the vocabulary of medieval Latin was limiting the expression of emotions, while the vernacular offered possibilities to reveal motivation.

and the Chartrian philosophers 'have in common a deep concern with the ascent of the mind to the vision of truth',[25] and are composing themselves on the way.

The 'inner man' is the subject, in the sense of the vehicle of 'experience', which takes such an important place in the religiosity of the age, whether related to 'affects', or to 'cognition'. Modern definitions of experience do not necessarily apply.[26] Far from being left to its own psychological devices, religious *experientia* is subject to the process of composition, including both *cogitatio* and *affectus*. As well as *homo interior*, the word 'composing' and its equivalents, or *forma* and its derivatives, can be found in the texts. They refer to the conceptual background of monastic pedagogy, and give access to an important element of how interiority is conceived. The canon or monk composes his (inner) life, making it into a work of art. Life as a work of art, as the result of the conscious formation of one's person: this concept may be associated with Renaissance man,[27] or with the ancient Greeks (and their 'technology of the self'), or with man in the twentieth and twenty-first century.[28] The notion seems hardly apposite to medieval culture. However, in *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, Johan Huizinga claimed that 'the attitude toward life that is usually seen as characteristic of the Renaissance—the striving to transform or even elevate one's own life to a higher level of artistic form—was by no means invented by the Renaissance'.[29] Huizinga was referring to late medieval knightly

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[25] Winthrop Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century: The Literary Influence of the School of Chartres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 5.

[26] Experience is about as vague a concept as inner life or self, and most definitions beg the question. Teresa De Lauretis defines experience thus: 'Experience is the process by which, for all social beings, subjectivity is constructed. Through that process one places oneself in or is placed in a social reality, and so perceives and comprehends as subjective (referring to, originating in, oneself) those relations—material, economic and interpersonal—which are in fact social, and, in a larger perspective, historical' (as quoted in Joan Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience', *Critical Enquiry*, 17 (1991), 773–797 (p. 782). What, for instance, in this definition, is subjectivity?

[27] Apart from Jacob Burckhardt's *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien*, see, among many other studies, Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

[28] Michel Foucault, who investigated the classical 'technologies of the self', was (according to biographer James Miller) involved 'in a lifelong struggle to honor Nietzsche's gnomic injunction to become what one is'; a dramatic project for which the script has to be written during life. Quoted in Alan Ryan, 'Foucault's Life and Hard Times', *New York Review of Books*, 8 April 1993, pp. 12–17 (p. 14).

[29] Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. by Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 39–40: 'Italy discovered new aspects of the beauty of life and gave life a new tone; but the attitude toward life that is usually seen as characteristic of the Renaissance—the striving to transform or even elevate

culture. More recently, and for an earlier period, Stephen Jaeger has shown how, from the tenth to the twelfth centuries, the pedagogical ideals of modelling life which originated in antiquity became central to life at the courts of bishops and secular rulers, and he explains how, in this period, the teaching of the cathedral schools was also aimed at forming the life of their pupils into 'works of art'.[30] But it is not only among the knights or at the courts and cathedral schools that one can discern the act of striving to make life into a work of art. In fact, knightly culture owes a lot to monastic life, as Huizinga makes clear, as does the cathedral school. 'Life as art' had been part of an age-old monastic tradition. From the very beginning, monks and hermits, continuing practices from late antique culture, intended to transform life, to discipline it into a form which would conform to certain, mostly written, examples; to practise a *cultus sui*.[31] Entrance into the monastic or eremitical life was only the beginning. The ultimate goal of this *conversio*, this turning to God, was the restoring in the self of the *imago Dei*, which had been lost by man's *aversio*: his turning away from God.

The supposed principle of mimesis behind this goal encapsulates the difference between modern and medieval ideas about life as a work of art. The mimetic notion of art has often been contrasted with romantic ideas about art as being, not mimetic, but creative: originating in some individual genius, whose individuality and geniality are distinguishable from that of others. However, the contrast should not be exaggerated. There is more mimesis in modern art, and more creativity in earlier art than this contrast suggests.[32] The monastic life as a work of art may present itself not as a creation but as an imitation of examples, a recovery of a present but corrupted image, which is the same for all.[33] Monks followed saintly models, written guides,

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one's own life to a higher level of artistic form—was by no means invented by the Renaissance.'

[30] See C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939–1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985) and Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

[31] Karl F. Morrison, *Understanding Conversion* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p. 97.

[32] On the importance of mimesis in culture, see the work of Karl F. Morrison, especially *The Mimetic Tradition of Reform in the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982) and Morrison, *I Am You: the Hermeneutics of Empathy in Western Literature, Theology, and Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988). See also Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (Bern: A. Francke, 1946, 8th edn 1988), also in translation as *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. by Willard Ropes Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953).

[33] On man as image and likeness see Robert Javelet, *Image et ressemblance au douzième siècle de saint Anselme à Alain de Lille*, 2 vols (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1967). On the

'scripts'. They did not write their own script, as modern man is supposed to do. The Life of Anthony is the most striking example, in a double sense: Anthony moulds his life according to Christian models, or reacting to his late-antique examples, and the Life as it was written down by Athanasius became a model for ages to come. Although in the Saints' Lives reference was made to the same models again and again, in fact, through the ages, the ideal of transforming life could be realized in many different ways. The ascetic performances of the Desert Fathers and late-antique monasticism, differing according to their different sources and backgrounds, were not the same as early medieval aristocratic and liturgical forms of religiosity, and these again were unlike the religiosity that developed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[34]

The treatises investigated in this book can be seen as scripts to be performed by their readers. In these scripts, the possible distinction between the *homo interior* and other people is much less a matter of importance than it is for modern individuals. Again, an optical illusion is at work in the notion of universality—a notion which is characteristic of philosophical and theological treatments of the individual, from Plato to Foucault, discarding differences of class, gender, history and other differentiating factors.[35] The treatises considered in this book are part of this tradition. They are written by male authors, for a primarily male public. However, many writings circulated widely in all sorts of monasteries, including women's communities. Although the detailed nature of the differences in how they were received and utilized lies beyond the present inquiry, the extent to which they suppose or help to construct a specific male identity should be kept in mind.[36]

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meaning of visualized images in a broader sense, going back to the idea that man is a painting by God, or Christ, see David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 349 (on John of Damascus); pp. 469–470, note 1 (on Origen).

[34] See Jean Leclercq, 'Saint Antoine dans la tradition monastique médiévale', in *Antonius Magnus Eremita 356–1956*, ed. by Basilius Steidle, Studia Anselmiana, 38 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum S. Anselmi; 'Orbis Catholicus', Herder, 1956), pp. 229–247.

[35] On these universalizing tendencies see Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 7–14.

[36] On some of the differences between works addressed to men and works addressed to women see Barbara Newman, 'Flaws in the Golden Bowl: Gender and Spiritual Formation in the Twelfth Century', in Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist. Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), pp. 19–45. For a nuanced treatment of Newman's view see Elisabeth Bos, 'The Literature of Spiritual Formation for Women in France and England, 1080 to 1180', in *Listen, Daughter: The* Speculum Virginum *and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Constant J. Mews (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 201–220.

The assumption of the universal character of the *homo interior*, apart from the distinctions of history, gender and class (which, in modern thought, are seen as determining identity) is part of the notion. Realizing one's inner man, in a context where the goal is the restoration of a universally valid Image, does not imply a striving for a distinct individuality. On the contrary, although differences between people are acknowledged—people are prone to different vices and find different virtues more or less difficult—if there is anything altogether forbidden in monastic life, it is *singularitas*: the wish to stand out. Bernard of Clairvaux's *De gradibus humilitatis*, a comment on the steps of humility of the Rule of Benedict which treats the steps of pride as well, makes this abundantly clear: *singularitas* is the fifth step on a downward way.[37] According to the description in the *Vita Ailredi*, part of the paradisaical character of the life of the first Cistercians in England is due to the fact that all are subject to the same laws, and equality reigns and personal standing is merged in the equality of each and all: there is no inequitable mark of exception.[38] The only distinction is in greater sanctity.[39] This does not necessarily mean a denial of personal differences between people, but, rather, that these differences are absorbed in a common goal.[40]

In the context of the works under consideration here, other individuals function, at most, as stamps to imprint upon oneself, or as a yardstick or a mirror, to know where one is on the road to the goal. They do not function as an outer circumference of one's own fluid 'identity'. At the same time, the universality of the goal and the community of fellow monks or hermits prevents the *homo interior* from becoming a lonely individual, as would be the case in some forms of Protestantism, according to

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[37] Bernard of Clairvaux, *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae* XIV, 42, in *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. by J. Leclercq, C. H. Talbot, H. M. Rochais, 8 vols (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957–1977), III, 13–59 (pp. 48–49).

[38] Walter Daniel, *Vita Ailredi*, 5: 'personalitas idemptitatem parit, singulis unam ipsamque omnibus similem' in *The Life of Ailred of Rievaulx by Walter Daniel*, ed. by F. M. Powicke (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1950), p. 12.

[39] See Evelyn Birge Vitz, 'Abelard's *Historia Calamitatum* and Medieval Autobiography' in Evelyn Birge Vitz, *Medieval Narrative and Modern Narratology: Subjects and Objects of Desire* (New York: New York University Press, 1989), pp. 11–37. Abelard does not present himself as an original or unique character, but as being greater than others in all kind of respects.

[40] See, for example, Hugh of Saint-Victor, *De arrha anime*: 'Iste amor unicus est, non tamen privatus, solus nec tamen solitarius, participatus nec divisus, communis et singularis, cunctorum singulus et singulorum totus' in *L'Oeuvre de Hugues de Saint-Victor*, I. *De institutione novitiorum. De virtute orandi. De laude caritatis. De arrha animae*, ed. by H. B. Feiss and P. Sicard; trans. (French) by D. Poirel, H. Rochais, P. Sicard. Introduction, notes and appendices by D. Poirel (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), pp. 226–282 (p. 248, ll. 337–339); PL 176, col. 959B.

Weber, resulting in '*ein Gefühl einer unerhörten inneren Vereinsamung des einzelnen Individuums*' (a feeling of unprecedented inner isolation of the solitary individual).[41]

Twelfth-century anthropology has been decisive in shaping ideas about the inner person and its composition. These anthropological ideas—explicit from the later twelfth century in many treatises about the soul, *De Anima*, or implicit in other writings—and their theological background have been the object of numerous historical and theological investigations. Medieval ideas about man as *Imago Dei* have been explored by Robert Javelet.[42] Monastic concepts and culture (in the broadest sense of the word) have been investigated by Jean Leclercq.[43] Medieval exegesis, which will be seen to be of paramount importance to the subject, has been systematically presented by Henri de Lubac.[44] Many of the works under consideration in this book are covered by these studies, and I shall gratefully make use of them. In recent years, attention has been drawn to the importance of memory in medieval anthropology, psychology and epistemology. Mary Carruthers' *The Book of Memory* investigates the role of *memoria* as contributing to a reading process, which is as important as the content of exegesis, in the formation of the inner person.[45] Janet Coleman's book *Ancient and Medieval Memories* has much to say on medieval ideas about the soul and its component parts, its origin, and its

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[41] Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie, 3 vols (repr. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1920, repr. 1988) I, 93.

[42] Javelet, *Image et ressemblance*.

[43] Jean Leclercq, *L'Amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu: Initiation aux auteurs monastiques du moyen age* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1957), also in translation as *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. by Catharine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1974, 2nd rev. edn).

[44] Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale: les quatres sens de l'Ecriture*, 4 vols (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1959–1964; repr. Desclée de Brouwer, 1993). Rachel Fulton points to the importance of exegesis in the changes in devotion in this period: see her *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002) p. 197 ('formal exegesis became one of the pre-eminent vehicles for affective, compassionate mimesis'). Fulton's study came to my attention after I finished the manuscript of this book.

[45] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Also relevant is her *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

relation to the body.[46] These studies are necessary references in an investigation of monastic ideas about inner life and life as a work of art.

While, on the one hand, this *homo interior* is supposed to be innate, on the other hand, one could say that he is constructed through a process. The person who comes to the monastery does so by their own decision. In this sense, they are an individual. But entering the community is only the first step in an unending process. This study aims to explore this process, as it unfolds in certain key texts, and to develop an understanding of the content of 'inner life' and its role in the monastic pedagogy. The pedagogical character of these texts is central to understanding their importance. They do not offer a description of monastic life so much as something comparable to a score of music: to be studied, practised and performed. On the part of the reader, they demand an affective and interpretative responsibility.[47] They are fictions—not in the sense of fabrications, but in the sense of designs giving a form to the formless, necessary for the reader, who is otherwise reduced to nothingness.

From this point of view, the best way to approach these works is to look at them in their entirety and to explore their relation to other works by the same author. Instead of systematically putting together, and comparing the different authors' ideas on a particular theme (man made in the image of God, for instance) I shall deal with the authors separately, following the procedures in their works. Each of these authors has been the subject of studies which try to give a systematic overview of their epistemology or other aspects of their teaching, and often such studies express frustration about the incoherence of these author's writings. From a systematic point of view the 'imprécision technique' of their concepts may be seen as the weakness of these texts, resulting in inconsistency.[48] But this inconsistency may be rewarding if it is not seen as a lack of precision but as a flexible, imaginative perspective, springing from the symbolic mentality of the age.[49] To discover what is conveyed by their concepts, they must not be isolated from the overall structure of the texts.

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[46] Janet Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[47] Rita Copeland and Stephen Melville, 'Allegory and Allegoresis, Rhetoric and Hermeneutics', *Exemplaria*, 3 (1991) 159–187 (p. 168).

[48] The expression is used by Chenu, see his 'Le Vocabulaire théologique', in *La Théologie au douzième siècle*, pp. 366–385 (p. 374), when he speaks about Bernard of Clairvaux's use of *forma*. Chenu, of course, does not mean to depreciate this use, but for many scholars who examine monastic authors from a philosophical point of view, this lack of precision is a failure.

[49] Compare this with Bernard McGinn, 'Ascension and Introversion in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum'*, in *San Bonaventura: 1274–1974*, 5 vols (Grottaferrata: Collegio San Bonaventura, 1974), III, 535–552 (p. 541): 'the function of the symbolic mentality is not to exclude diversity of expression or representation; rather it invites accretions of meaning and a variety of presentations'.

These texts will yield their cohesion on a different level from that of conceptual-philosophical consistency: as guides into monastic life, as 'scripts' for the monk or canon, who, reading such a script and 'recomposing' it in his mind, will compose his self according to it—will become a 'living text', a work of art—when what is read, is enacted inwardly.[50] In this the authors are often helped by their imaginative use of biblical texts and images.[51] A whole repertory of possible meanings for these images and texts is at their disposal to illustrate what the writers want to say.

I can only deal with a small part of the abundance of religious literature from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Apart from widely known explorers of the inner life like Anselm of Canterbury[52] and Bernard of Clairvaux,[53] there are many other authors who left treatises of instruction, exegesis and sermons. Rather than trying to cover exhaustively the instructions of many authors, I have preferred to treat a limited number of authors and to connect their writing on instruction with their other works—and revealing, in the process, the instructional, pedagogical character of these other works. The authors treated in this book are not to be regarded as examples illustrating a linear development of interiority, and I have not followed a strict chronological order. The choice of authors has been guided by the wish to illustrate different aspects which are important to an understanding of the twelfth-century notion of 'inner life': monastic tradition, theological-anthropological concepts, exegetical procedures, and the role of 'affects' and experience. An emphasis on one aspect of an author's work does not mean that this aspect is lacking in the work of other authors. Rather, together they illustrate what was conceptually possible when it came to thinking about the inner life.

At the same time, it is worth while drawing attention to the literary quality of some of these works. The literary quality of twelfth-century authors from the circle of the Chartres Platonists has been well established by Peter Dronke and by Winthrop Wetherbee.[54] Aside from authors such as Anselm of Canterbury and

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[50] Among many examples, compare Peter of Celle, *De disciplina claustrali*: 'Quod enim quasi mortuum iacet in pelle morticina deformatum in littera, vita vivit, cum agitur quod legitur' in *Pierre de Celle: L'école du cloître*, ed. by Gérard de Martel, SC 240 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1977), p. 146.

[51] See Paul Meyvaert: 'The most rewarding approach to material of this sort is to view it as a grand exercise in the use of the imagination', quoted in the 'Introduction' by Constable and Smith to the *Libellus de diversis ordinibus*, p. XXIII.

[52] R.W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[53] On Bernard see Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux*.

[54] See, for example, Peter Dronke, *Fabula: Explorations into the Uses of Myth in Medieval Platonism*, Mittellateinische Studien und Texte, IX (Leiden: Brill, 1974); Peter Dronke, *Intellectuals and Poets in Medieval Europe*, Storia e Letteratura, 183 (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1992); and Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry*.

Bernard of Clairvaux, the literary talents of other monastic authors has gone unrecognized. Not all of them were literary talents. In fact, the reading of many monastic treatises demands some patience. As Jauss concedes, with regard to allegorical works, such reading can, at times, be felt as a *Bussübung* (penance).[55] Yet, one of the rewards gained from the study of the authors discussed here is a new appreciation of their literary prowess. I hope these essays contribute to translate their theological and monastic concerns into terms that are interesting to modern readers, yet respectful of historical difference.

In the first chapter I study the traditional background of the *homo interior*. The emphasis on interiority was a reflection of changes in religious sensibility, but it was also embedded in monastic and theological tradition. Without pretending that there was a linear evolution in this respect between the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the eleventh-century background cannot be ignored. The 'return to the desert', or the ideas of the 'life of the primitive church', made available, anew, the heritage of exploration of the inner life as it had developed, in different ways, in early Christianity. The point of departure is a study of Peter Damian, for whom the notion of spiritual warfare remained at the core of his conceptions. Benedictine monasticism, at its most traditional and classical, at the same time harbours the development of interiority and renewal of traditional monastic life, in the shape of the revival of still older forms. Peter Damian repeatedly exhorts his readers to construct a wall of virtues to protect the inner life. In looking at his work I will try to show how the domain for an inner life was abstracted from an outer world.

Much of the spiritual militancy remains in the twelfth century. But the notion of 'inner life', once it is taken for granted, can be more elaborately explored. In the second chapter I shall investigate the work of Hugh of Saint-Victor, a regular canon, who wrote treatises for the novices of the new foundation of Saint-Victor, as well as theological and exegetical works. Hugh's theological works contributed to the development of scholastic theology, but they were intended for, and indeed read by, monks as well. The many-facetted character of his large *oeuvre* justifies the length of this chapter. It will make explicit some of the most important theological notions of the period, and will highlight their impact on, and interconnectedness with, the ideals of *paideia*.

In the third chapter I will show how later in the twelfth century Hugh's pupil, Richard of Saint-Victor, fully exploited Hugh's ideas on exegesis in his own writings. In Richard's works, 'composing the inner person' becomes almost synonymous with (tropological) exegesis. The reader, mimetically following Richard's exegetical narrative, will realize his inner self.

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[55] Hans Robert Jauss, 'Alterität und Modernität der mittelalterlichen Literatur', in Hans Robert Jauss, *Alterität und Modernität der mittelalterlichen Literatur: Gesammelte Aufsätze 1956–1976* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1977), pp. 9–47 (p. 14).

In the last chapter I return to the world of the monasteries and their reform, which was the point of departure for the first chapter. William of Saint-Thierry appealed to the ideals of the desert, as did Peter Damian. However, the monastic world of William of Saint-Thierry was as different from Peter Damian's, as it was from that of Hugh and Richard. Whereas Peter emphasized spiritual combat, and the Victorines are usually regarded as intellectual in their approach to the religious life, William of Saint-Thierry is generally seen as a proponent of the affective religiosity which would become so influential in the later Middle Ages. The emphasis in William's work on the monk's *affectus* and *experientia* will form the basis of an investigation into the meaning of these concepts in the constitution of an inner life. If they contain a hint of something recognizable as a modern outlook on the inner life (which perhaps cannot be found in the ideas of either Peter Damian or the Victorines) it still remains to be seen what their meaning was in the context of William's work.

In the Epilogue I evaluate the tradition of religious pedagogy which had developed during the century. Drawing on this tradition, devotional pedagogy would continue well into the later Middle Ages, and beyond. Many of the works considered here were widely translated and used, though the discourses in which they were incorporated would belong to a different age.

Peter Damian:
Violence and Fragility

Interiorizing developments, which are so clearly a part of twelfth-century spirituality, are a continuation of earlier tendencies. Tradition as it was present in Benedictine monasticism as well as in reform movements could accomodate new trends. Indeed, it is precisely this accomodating potential of tradition which is typical of the Middle Ages, or more generally of the pre-modern age.[1] The tradition of the Desert Fathers as it was revived in the eleventh-century ideals of a return to the *vita apostolica* and to the *forma ecclesiae primitivae* was a source of inspiration, not only in providing a model of ascetic and eremitical life, but also in the emphasis on inner temptations.[2] In the monastic developments of the early Middle Ages this tradition of the desert was not forgotten, but it had been interpreted in a way to suit the liturgically oriented religiosity of the period.[3] In this religiosity, the distinction between outer and inner life did not disappear, but seemed to be of little relevance compared with the significance of ritual, which encompassed both without distinguishing them. Man was part of a universe which seemed to be one and self-contained. God, his creation the cosmos, and the soul were parts of a unified world-view.[4] According to Richard Southern, the early Middle Ages were dominated by a

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[1] For the flexibility of tradition as a format of medieval culture see Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), especially Chapter 8, 'Tradition and Modernity: Models from the Past', pp. 159–171.

'sacramental view of man's place and powerlessness in the world'.[5] More than anyone else, Southern, in his biographies of Anselm of Canterbury and in his books and articles on Medieval Humanism, sketched the emergence of 'a greater concentration on man and on human experience as a means of knowing God'.[6]

The growing importance of an inner life, distinct from outer aspects, as the domain of this experience, thus emerges in the context of traditional Benedictine monasticism. In theology as it was known in the monasteries, the dominant mode was exegesis, with its three- or four-fold level of history, allegory, tropology and anagogy. Even if tropology was not as important as it would become in the twelfth century, it was never totally neglected and kept alive a notion of the 'inner man'. Nor did the sacramental view mentioned above exclude individual devotion. Affective devotion, presupposing a concern with a personal response, can be found in Carolingian prayer books. But these prayers stayed the same for centuries.[7] As John C. Hirsch has shown, using a prayer book written around the year 1000 as an example, prayers were structured to guide the monk into repentance, or, in other words, into a sense of a sinning self, before he can go on to adore God and his

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[2] See Chenu, 'Le Réveil évangélique'. See also Chenu, *L'Éveil de la conscience,* p. 48: 'Les mythes de la communauté chrétienne primitives (*Actes*) ne sont pas des références historiques documentaires, mais des réinterprétations incarnées dans les aspirations du temps.'

[3] See for instance the study of the Life of Saint Anthony in the early Middle Ages by Leclercq, 'Saint Antoine dans la tradition monastique médiévale'.

[4] See for example Heinrich Fichtenau, 'Askese und Laster in der Anschauung des Mittelalters', in Heinrich Fichtenau, *Beiträge zur Mediävistik: Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, 3 vols (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1975–1986), I (1975), 24–107 (pp. 47–52). See also Timothy Reuter, 'Pre-Gregorian Mentalities', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 45 (1994), 465–474. Alex Baumans shows how a tenth-century work such as Odo of Cluny's *Occupatio* is meant to give the monk a guideline, a content for his meditation, by focussing on the history of salvation. It does not, however, urge the monk to reflect upon his self, to introspection. See Alex Baumans, 'Original Sin, the History of Salvation and the Monastic Ideal of St. Odo of Cluny in his *Occupatio'*, in *Serta Devota in memoriam Guillelmi Lourdaux*, ed. by Werner Verbeke and others, 2 vols, Mediaevalia Lovanensia Series I, Studia, XXI (Leuven: University Press Leuven, 1995), II: Cultura Mediaevalis, pp. 335–357.

[5] See for instance R. W. Southern, 'Medieval Humanism', in *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), pp. 29–60 (p. 33); R. W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe*, 2 vols, I: Foundations (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 25.

[6] Southern, 'Medieval Humanism' p. 33; Southern, *Scholastic Humanism*, I, 26–28. See also Southern, *Saint Anselm*.

[7] See Southern, *Saint Anselm*, p. 98: 'Nothing, indeed, shows the conservatism of the preceding two centuries more clearly than the stability of forms of devotion which had no liturgical framework to ensure their permanence.'

saints.[8] From that time onwards, more authors are known who emphasize personal experience and introspection. Otloh of Saint-Emmeram, reporting on his inner temptations in his *Liber de temptatione cuiusdam monachi* (as well as in his other works on the religious life), exemplifies a new interest in experience. John of Fécamp is another eleventh-century writer who, in his emphasis on introspection, returns to an inwardness with Augustinian features, even when this introspection is not itself the object of analysis, as it was in Augustine, and would become again, in a different way, in the twelfth century.[9] At the end of the century Anselm of Canterbury expanded the monastic landscape in his *Prayers* and *Meditations*. Anselm not only represented introspection in his works; he propagated it as the basis of the devotion of the individual monk. Moreover, in the century's development of a 'prolonged outpouring' of devotion, he added 'the discipline of exact thought and the warmth of exuberant feelings to the religious impulses of the day'.[10] His *Prayers* and *Meditations* appeared under his own name; this, according to Southern, was a symptom of the breaking up of 'a corporate, anonymous environment. The sinner stands alone before God', not only in a private chamber instead of the church, but withdrawing into 'the secrecy of the soul', into introspection.[11] What characterizes this introspection is its goal: first of all, horror of self. Secondly, it is a first step to the knowledge of God. Maybe Anselm can be said to epitomize this emphasis on 'the horror', before introspection became a religious exercise of a more optimistic, confiding nature, in the twelfth century.

In this chapter the work of another eleventh-century author, Peter Damian, will serve to illustrate how tradition converges with new tendencies into a renewed perspective on the inner man. Peter Damian (1007–1072) has been characterized as one of the 'most important representatives of the traditional spirituality of early medieval monasticism'.[12] He is also a representative of the new forms of religious life, which, by their existence alone, favoured a personal element: one had to choose between different 'orders', different possibilities of a religious life. Calati has pointed to Peter's greater emphasis on interiority, compared with the importance of

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[8] John C. Hirsch, *The Boundaries of Faith: The Development and Transmission of Medieval Spirituality* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 11–22.

[9] On Otloh see Sabine Gäbe, *Otloh von St. Emmeram. 'Liber de temptatione cuiusdam monachi': Untersuchung, kritische Edition und Übersetzung*, Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters, 29 (Bern: Peter Lang, 1992); on John of Fécamp see Jean Leclercq and Jean-Paul Bonnes, *Un Maître de la vie spirituelle au XIe siècle: Jean de Fécamp* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1946); Bernard McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism (The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism II)* (London: SCM Press, 1995), pp. 126, 135–137.

[10] Southern, *Saint Anselm*, p. 99.

[11] Southern, *Saint Anselm*, pp. 101–102.

[12] McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism*, p. 122.

liturgy in Cluny.[13] However, there is a danger here of anachronism. A dichotomy, of liturgical versus personal prayer, should not be projected back onto the Benedictine monasticism of the eleventh century—it is indeed exactly the new development of this dichotomy that we are witnessing. At the same time, it remains to be seen what interiority means in Peter Damian, who articulates this dichotomy, and how, in his works of edification, it functions in his ideas on the formation of the person.

In the following sections, I shall approach inwardness in Peter's work from a number of different perspectives. After a short discussion of Peter's view on the relative value of different forms of religious life—including that of lay people—I concentrate on some of Peter's ideas on the eremitical life, in Peter's view the most perfect way. Next, it is shown how, within this life, with its strong emphasis on physical, external, ascetic practices, monastic reading offers the first obvious focus for a more inward exercise, presenting the readers with models of biblical stories which they can reflect on inwardly. However, before further exploring Peter's notion of inwardness, I will discuss how Peter often directs his readers by giving them models of exemplary hermits. Again, what is most striking in Peter's choice of examples is the emphasis on external elements of physical ascesis and seclusion from the world. Peter's most elaborate discussions of the inner life, to which I then turn, are embedded within this seclusion. Peter paints the inner life in terms of an inner room, and claims its priority over outer practices, pointing to the danger posed by the deception inherent in outer appearances. Ultimately, models and rules make way for the experience of the hermit's cell in forming the inner man. For the person who undergoes this formation process, the dichotomy between outer and inner is resolved.

Born in Ravenna, and following an education in the liberal arts, Peter enjoyed a career as a teacher. This background shows through in his later opposition against the new dialectics.[14] Peter became a hermit in Fonte Avellana, according to tradition

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[13] Benedetto Calati, art. 'Pierre Damien', *Dictionnaire de la Spiritualité*, XII-2 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1986) cols 1551–1573 (col. 1557). On Peter's attitude towards Cluny see Irven M. Resnick, 'Peter Damian on Cluny, Liturgy and Penance', *The Journal of Religious History*, 15 (1988), 61–75.

[14] On Peter's attitude towards dialectics see the works of André Cantin, for example his introduction in *Pierre Damien. Lettre sur la toute-puissance divine*, ed., trans. and notes by André Cantin, SC 191 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1972); Patricia Ranft, 'The Role of Eremitic Monks in the Development of the Medieval Intellectual Tradition', in *From Cloister to Classroom: Monastic and Scholastic Approaches to Truth*, ed. by E. Rozanne Elder (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1986), pp. 80–95; M. B. Pranger, 'Anselm Misunderstood: Utopian Approaches Towards Learning in the Eleventh Century', in *The European Dimension of Anselm's Thinking*, ed. by Josef Zumr and Vilém Herold, proceedings of the conference organized by the Anselm Society and the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague, April 27–30, 1992 (Prague: Institute of Philosophy; Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 1993), pp. 163–189.

founded by one of the disciples of Romuald, whose *Vita* Peter wrote.[15] From 1043 onwards he was prior of this community. In 1057 he was chosen cardinal-bishop of Ostia. He is known as a spokesman of ecclesiastical reform, to which he contributed as a cardinal, and of the new eremitism: apart from his *Vita Romualdi* he portrayed several other hermits in his letters. Peter wrote many sermons and also poetry. He wrote for monks and hermits about their way of life. His letters of spiritual direction and edification were addressed not only to monks and hermits, but also to lay people, among them his sisters and the Holy Roman Empress Agnes. Often these letters were not private communications but, rather, public documents, directed at a wide readership.[16] I will not discuss his activities in the wider movement of Church reform here, but one has to keep in mind these activities and the urgency with which he undertook them as a background or a counterpart to his dealings with monastic and eremitical life.

In a well-known passage in his *Vita Romualdi*, Peter tells how Romuald, the Italian hermit, with the help of a count, and at the request of many people, built a monastery. Peter then comments upon Romuald's ongoing efforts to promote the monastic life. What he had achieved was never enough for him; he would immediately hurry on to the next project 'so that one might think that he wished to convert the whole world into a hermitage, and to bring the whole population into the monastic order'.[17] In many other letters the same view can be found. However, one has to allow for Peter's rhetorical adjustment to his addressees, mostly hermits, or

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[15] For Peter's biography see Calati, 'Pierre Damien'; Jean Leclercq, *Saint Pierre Damien: ermite et homme d'Église*, Uomini e dottrine, 8 (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1960); Lester K. Little, 'The Personal Development of Peter Damian', in *Order and Innovation in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Joseph R. Strayer*, ed. by William C. Jordan, Bruce McNab and Teofilo F. Ruiz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 317–341; Kurt Reindel, *Einleitung*, in *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Die Briefe der Deutschen Kaiserzeit. IV. Band, 4 vols (München: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1983–1993), I (1983), 1–8. The Letters 1–120 have been translated into English by Owen Blum, *Peter Damian: Letters*, The Fathers of the Church, Mediaeval Continuation, 5, 4 vols (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1989–1998). Throughout this chapter the citations are from the Reindel edition and the translations are mine.

[16] See Kurt Reindel, 'Petrus Damiani und seine Korrespondenten', *Studi Gregoriani*, 10 (1975), 203–219. On the public nature of letters in the medieval period see Giles Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, 17 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1976).

[17] *Vita beati Romualdi*, Chapter 37: 'Tantus namque in sancti viri pectore faciendi fructus ardor incanduerat, ut effectis numquam contentus, dum alia faceret, ad facienda mox alia properaret: adeo ut putaretur totum mundum in heremum velle convertere et monachico ordini omnem populi multitudinem sotiare'; from *Vita beati Romualdi*, ed. by Giovanni Tabacco, Fonti per la storia d'Italia pubblicate dall' Istituto storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 94 (Rome: Istituto storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1957, repr. Turin 1982), p. 78, ll. 1–6.

people who have given up the world. Peter admits that there are many ways by which one can go to God, and there are various orders in the whole community of believers, but naturally to the hermits Peter would emphasize the supremacy of the eremitical life. One may consider the letters as an effort to encourage people who had converted to this difficult life, and maybe to arm them with an implicit argument about their superiority in their dealings with the outside world. Peter also admonished people who lived in the world. He wrote letters to counts and countesses in which he advised them, not to leave the world, but to be just rulers and to protect the poor. On a more general level, Peter seems to see the possibility of a devout life for laymen. In a letter to a nobleman, he explains the meaning of the divine office with its seven hours and he urges the man to try to apply himself to these hours, in a shortened version if need be, and proposes examples of other devout laymen. In this letter he explicitly allows for human frailty. He distinguishes between the seven deadly sins and seven minor sins, which even a most just man could not avoid committing, and for which the seven daily prayers are a defence:

> Whoever fulfils with daily devotion this divine office, if he does not commit grave crimes, and tempers the seven lighter ones enumerated before, with God's help, as far as human fragility allows, in the examination of the tremendous judge he will be, I dare say confidently, absolved from those sins he cannot avoid.[18]

Someone who is not able to pray in church, because of work, could pay his debt by just repeating one psalm, or, if he is not literate, he can just say the Lord's prayer.[19] Peter then gives some examples of miraculous help granted to someone who had always respected the divine office. On the other hand, in a letter to Countess Blanche who had left the world, he offers strong warnings against temptations to go back to the world, and then urges her not to despair if she sees that she is just a beginner: even if she falters, she will be better than a secular person who tries to be religious.[20]

The Hermit's Way

Despite evincing some reservations, it is clear that, for Peter Damian, no way is so straight, so certain, as the life of the hermit. As he writes to the hermit Stephanus:

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[18] *Epistola* 17: 'Quisquis itaque septem haec canonicarum horarum officia cotidiana Deo devotione persolverit, si a gravibus illis criminibus omnibus modis alienus, a levibus quoque septem, quae superius enumerata sunt, in quantum humana fragilitas patitur, cum Dei subvenientis auxilio temperavit, ab his, quae cavere non potest, ut confidenter dicam, in examine tremendi iudicis absolutus erit' (Reindel, I, p. 162, ll. 22–27).

[19] *Epistola* 17 (Reindel, I, p. 164, ll. 18–21).

[20] *Epistola* 66 (Reindel, II, p. 274, ll. 15–23).

> This is the road that, among others, leads to the highest things, is the most eminent and excellent, and places the one who is running on it already in his homeland, and somehow refreshes him while he is still busy in work and comforts him in rest.[21]

The hermitage is certainly the model for religious life, against the background of an outside world in decay. The monastic life, in Peter's interpretation of the Rule of Benedict, is just an introduction to the hermit's life, and the hermit's life is the natural continuation of the life of the Benedictine monastery.[22] If not all monks reach this final stage, that does not mean that it is not the goal, as Peter explains when he defends the possibility of monks changing their monastery for a hermit's life, and thus giving up the *stabilitas loci*.[23]

In this way of life, physical ascetic practices are very important. They betray the strong penitential character of Peter's ideals—and are meant as an equivalent to martyrdom in a time when occasions for this ultimate form of *imitatio Christi* had disappeared. At first sight, the stark physical aspects of Peter's eremitism, as well as his reformer's zeal, may appear to be at odds with any opportunity for interiority. The militancy of much of Peter's work leaves an impression of overwhelming power, even violence, which seems to leave little room for something so elusive as the inner life. However, in the following I hope to show how, with the help of these ascetic practices, the *homo interior* is delineated from a hostile outer world, and also how the physical ascesis is founded in an inner life: militancy turns out to be the obverse of fragility. The juxtaposition of violence and fragility is comprehended in the even more fundamental contrast between divine power and human frailty. In one

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[21] *Epistola* 50: 'Haec est enim via, quae inter reliquas ad summa tendentes eminens et excelsa, interim per se currentem iam ponit in patria, et eum, qui adhuc versatur in labore, iam quodammodo recreat et consolatur in requie' (Reindel, II, p. 80, l. 24 – p. 81, l. 2). This is one of many similar quotations; compare for example *Epistola* 50: 'Plane ut compendiosius eloquar, multae sunt viae, quibus itur ad Deum. Diversi sunt ordines in universitate fidelium, sed in omnibus his nulla profecto via est tam recta, tam certa, tam expedita, atque cunctis supplantatoriae inpactionis offendiculis aliena, quia et omnes fere occasiones, quibus peccari possit, eliminat, et plurima virtutum, quibus Deo placeatur, incrementa convectat, ita ut quodammodo facultatem adimat delinquendi, et bonis operibus insistendi vim necessitatis imponat' (Reindel, II, p. 82, ll. 5–11).

[22] See Christian Lohmer, *Heremi Conversatio. Studien zu den monastischen Vorschriften des Petrus Damiani*, Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinertums, 39 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1991).

[23] See Lohmer, *Heremi Conversatio*, for Peter's use of the *Regula Benedicti* and his view of the relationship between monasticism and eremitism. See also Michel Grandjean, *Laïcs dans l'Église. Regards de Pierre Damien, Anselme de Cantorbéry, Yves de Chartres*, Théologie Historique, 97 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1994). For Peter's preference for eremitism, see *Epistola* 152 (Reindel, IV, pp. 5–12). Peter's attitude towards monasticism is not without ambiguities, see for example his praise of Cluny in his letters to the monks there: *Epistola* 100 (Reindel, III, pp. 101–115) and *Epistola* 113 (Reindel, III, pp. 289–295).

of his sermons Peter writes of the incarnation as 'the Son of God making himself a harness of our fragility, in which […] he vanquished the powers of the air'.[24] Thus fragility is associated with strength, as also becomes clear in Peter's letter to the hermits of Fonte Avellana. In a world in decay, where even monasticism is corrupted, God is the origin and fountain of their virtue. The hermits' community is compared with the one leaf which does not fall off the tree despite all the winter storms: in a beautiful passage Peter presents the precariousness of the hermits' life, protected by divine power alone:

> Who can tell the greatness of God's work adequately [...]? We see a single leaf on a tree, about to fall under the winterly cold. Gone is the greenness of autumnal softness, it will almost fall, it scarcely adheres to its branch, everything tells of its soft fall, the wind is getting up, furious storms are raging, the winterly horror is densified by thick air, and even more astonishingly, while the earth is covered with all the other leaves, and the tree is stripped of its beauty, only this one leaf, while no other stays, persists, and as the only remaining heir, succeeds in the fraternal possession. What else is left to understand in the consideration of such a thing, but that not even the leaf of a tree can fall, unless divine power ordains it?[25]

The evocation of utter fragility is suddenly contrasted with the power which contains this fragility. The comparison is meant to make it clear that it is no wonder that God strengthens the hermits in their life, while, in Peter's view, the monastic order for the most part is in decay. Fragility is also comprehended within a more solid frame as, in this decaying world, the hermits of Fonte Avellana make their life into a *forma*, or *imago*, for later generations to be followed. These words are often used in Peter's letters, as well as derivatives such as *in-formare* and *con-formare*. They are connected to a common view of how the formation process works. In his letter to the hermits of Fonte Avellana, Peter explains how he wants to include something about the way of life of his correspondents, in order to leave a knowledge to their successors of what can be read in their works. He thus describes the spiritual exercises, which comprise the fasting customs, and other ascetic practices. The virtue that exceeds all the others is their mutual charity. He then appeals to his

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[24] Sermon 35: 'Loricam quippe sibi de nostra fragilitate composuit, in qua *exultans ut gigas et potens ac fortis in proelio* potestates aérias debellauit'; see *Sancti Petri Damiani Sermones*, ed. by Ioannis Lucchesi, CCCM 57 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1983), p. 211, ll. 11–13.

[25] *Epistola* 18: 'Quis autem divini operis magnitudinem narrare sufficiat […]? Videamus in arbore folium sub ipsis pruinis hyemalibus lapsabundum et consumpto autumpnalis clementiae virore iamiam pene casurum, ita ut vix ramusculo, cui dependet, inhaereat, sed apertissima levis ruinae signa praetendat. Inhorrescunt flabra, venti furentes hinc inde concutiunt, brumalis horror crassi aeris rigore densatur, atque, ut magis stupeas, defluentibus reliquis undique foliis terra sternitur et depositis comis suo arbor decore nudatur, cum illud solum nullo manente permaneat et velut cohaeredum superstes in fraternae possessionis iura succedat. Quid autem nobis intellegendum in huius rei consideratione relinquitur, nisi quia nec arboris folium preter divinum cadere praesumat imperium?' (Reindel, I, p. 169, ll. 11–22).

successor to pay attention to what he has written: 'To impress its form to the way of life of you and yours, you should keep it as a seal, never to have this image depraved, never to let this salutary form be worn out by negligence.'[26]

In this rather short letter, Peter presents the life of the hermits as a text to be read, and an image to be impressed upon future generations. The other side of this mimetic process is implied when Peter addresses novices of the monastic life: the idea of imprinting is behind his admonitions to the youngest pupils in the monastery in a letter written most probably to abbot Mainardus of Pomposa, in which Peter develops his ideal program of the monastic life. In this letter, Peter explicitly distinguishes between the different age groups in the monastery, from young boys to the old. Reflecting the pedagogical views that were common at the time, he tells the young boys that their age is like wax—that is, still flexible: this is the age to form them.[27] Anselm of Canterbury, according to his *Vita*, used the same metaphor: the wax must not be too soft or too hard, that is, one should form a pupil at the right age.[28] If this points to a common notion about the process of formation, Anselm's pedagogical moderation forms a contrast with Peter's much greater severity. As Anselm tells an abbot who is frustrated by his educating task, harshness will only result in suspicion and jealousy and evil thought in the pupils, who are like tree-shoots which should have adequate space to grow.[29]

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[26] *Epistola* 18: 'Haec igitur pauca quae scripsi, successor mi, sedulus inspice, atque ad imprimendam formam tuae tuorumque conversationi quasi quoddam signaculum tene. Nunquam apud te haec depravetur imago, nunquam tuo tempore haec salutaris forma per incuriam deterat' (Reindel, I, p. 177, ll. 10–13).

[27] *Epistola* 153: 'quia nunc aetas vestra cerea est, et sicut teneri adhuc estis in pusillitate membrorum, ita etiam utique flexibiles diversitatibus morum' (Reindel, IV, p. 51, ll. 27–29). The same idea can be found in *Epistola* 132: 'Videlicet dum aetas tua cerea est, dum mores teneri, in quamlibet valent partem indifferenter adduci. Cum ipsis igitur corporalibus incrementis coeva virtutum exercitia cohalescant, ut consuetudo leviget, quod debilitas humanae fragilitatis abhorret' (Reindel, III, p. 443, ll. 13–16).

[28] Eadmer, *Vita Anselmi* I, 11, ed. and trans. by R. W. Southern, *The Life of Saint Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury by Eadmer* (First published in Nelson's Medieval Texts, 1962, repr. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 20–21. In hagiography the metaphor of the saint imprinting the seal or form of his life on his community is common, see Van 't Spijker, *Als door een speciaal stempel*, especially p. 75 and pp. 108–110. See also the examples in Giles Constable, 'The Ideal of the Imitation of Christ', in *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 179. The image of wax and seal will be used by Abelard in his discussion of the Trinity; see D. E. Luscombe, 'St Anselm and Abelard', *Anselm Studies: An Occasional Journal*, 1 (Millwood, NY: Kraus International Publications, 1983), 287–229 (pp. 211–213). The comparison of the soul to a wax tablet goes back to Plato, *Theaetetus* 191C; compare Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. by Willard R. Trask, 7th edn. with afterword by Peter Godman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 305.

[29] Eadmer, *Vita Anselmi* 1, 22, in *The Life of Saint Anselm*, pp. 37–39.

Before examining the wider meaning of model images—of seals, or 'living texts'—in Peter's pedagogy, I will discuss a different sort of model, implied in Peter's reading of scriptural texts—a way of reading which has an immediate importance for the 'inner man'.

Reading the Inner Man

In his model of the life in Fonte Avellana, the *spiritalis exercitii studia*[30] mainly consist of physical practices. Only the reference of mutual charity and a short notice about books as material for meditation remind the reader of the non-physical aspects of religious life. In other works Peter directly addresses a distinct inner aspect. This is closely connected with Peter's monastic ideas of reading. In his *Letter* 160, about the forty-two stages of Israel during its journey after the exodus from Egypt mentioned in Numbers 33, he explains how to read a biblical text, even if, on the surface, it seems to have no deeper meaning:

> The whole discourse and whatever is read there on the historical level, is wholly fulfilled in us by the *mysterium* of spiritual comprehension. For what happened then visibly, fits us through spiritual understanding; for our time that old age battled. […] We indeed go out of the furnace of Egyptian servitude, and strive to enter the Promised Land through many dwelling-places—that is, through the varied growth of virtues.[31]

At the end of a long letter to two hermits (to which we shall return later) Peter explains again the common view of how to make scripture one's own, combining metaphors of walking and eating: 'Let the field of divine speech suffice for our discourse. Let us continuously go through this field, and have delightful walks in it'.[32] After the metaphor of the field of scripture, Peter switches to a comparison with food and the senses:

> Certainly, these dishes sweetly fill the stomach of our mind and yet owe nothing to the recesses of the sewer. For they leave absolutely nothing of themselves for discharge, but, to furnish strength, they diffuse themselves through the pores of all veins and the internal parts of all organs. […] Let the holy animals continuously chew over again

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[30] *Epistola* 18 (Reindel, I, p. 173, l. 12).

[31] *Epistola* 160: 'Notandum autem quoniam omnis ille discursus et quicquid illic gestum hystorialiter legitur, totum in nobis per mysterium spiritalis intellectus impletur. Quod enim tunc visibiliter gestum est, nobis per spiritalem intellegentiam congruit, nostro tempori vetus illud saeculum militavit. […] Nos enim de fornace Aegyptiacae servitutis egredimur, et terram repromissionis ingredi per plurima mansionum loca, hoc est per diversa virtutum incrementa conamur' (Reindel, IV, p. 104, l. 6 – p. 105, l. 1).

[32] *Epistola* 165: 'Sufficiat autem nostrae discursioni divini campus eloquii. Per hunc campum iugiter gradiamur, in eo delectabiliter spatiemur' (Reindel, IV, p. 229, ll. 13–14).

this food through the effort of unceasing consideration, and have it flow back from the stomach of science to the throat of memory through repeated meditation.[33]

This is the traditional monastic way of reading, which always involved a personal, inward effort. Peter applies this method of reading—which demands a corresponding exegetical way of writing—in his works. In a letter to several ecclesiastical dignitaries, for instance, he explains the meaning of the Sabbath, and the creation of the world as a model for the creation of the *homo interior*:

> For since man is called a microcosmos—that is, a little world—it is necessary that, in his struggle to achieve full growth, he imitates the images of the creation of the earth; as this visible and physical world is completed by the mass and multitude of its parts, so our inner man gradually arrives at his fullness by the increase of virtues.[34]

What follows is an exegesis in which 'Let there be light', *fiat lux*, means the beginning of the illumination of faith in man; the firmament is the power of scripture, the waters above are the choirs of angels, the waters below the multitude of men. Then, when man through the firmament of scripture begins to distinguish between lower and higher waters—that is to separate earthly from heavenly things— this is the second day in man, when he not only has the light of faith but begins to develop the discernment of things. The waters are gathered when after distinguishing between heavenly and earthly things man divides the latter more precisely and distinguishes the unfaithful from the just.[35]

In the next chapter, we will see how the interpretation of a passage such as this is personalized, referring not to discernment between different people, but between different feelings and thoughts within the reader: the faithful and unfaithful present different possibilities in the same person. In Peter there is a strong opposition between different people. A similar dichotomy lies behind Peter's explanation of the Sabbath. As the creation of the world ends in God's resting on the seventh day, the

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[33] *Epistola* 165: 'Quae nimirum epulae et mentis nostrae stomachum suaviter replent et tamen cloacarum secessibus nichil debent. Nichil enim de se prorsus egestioni relinquunt, sed ad praebendas vires per omnium se venarum poros cunctorumque viscerum penitus interna diffundunt. […] Hoc pabulum sacra animalia per assiduae retractationis studium iugiter ruminent, quae nimirum a ventre scientiae ad memoriae guttur sepius iterata meditatione redundent' (Reindel, IV, p. 229, ll. 24–33). On this monastic way of reading, see Leclercq, *L'Amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu*; Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*.

[34] *Epistola* 49: 'Nam quia homo microcosmus hoc est minor mundus asseritur, necesse est, ut ad suae plenitudinis incrementa contendens ipsam mundanae conditionis speciem imitetur, ut sicut visibilis atque corporeus hic mundus per suarum molem ac multitudinem consummatus est partium, sic et homo noster interior paulatim ad sui plenitudinem veniat per augmenta virtutum' (Reindel, II, p. 66, ll. 9–14).

[35] *Epistola* 49 (Reindel, II, p. 67). On Peter's exegesis of this passage, based on a strict distinction between those who have left the world and the rest of the world, see Grandjean, *Laïcs dans l'Église*, pp. 72–75.

parallel creation of the *homo interior* culminates in the mind becoming a temple of God. Peter explains how God's sanctification of the Sabbath is to construct a temple for himself in the mind of the holy and perfect man:

> This temple of man is a spiritual paradise, that is a holy mind, a perfect mind, a pure mind, formed after the image of its Maker. This mind, I say, or rational soul, rightly is called a paradise, well-watered by the stream of heavenly gifts and it blooms and flourishes adorned with the buds of holy virtues just as those of fruitful trees and herbs.[36]

The fountain of paradise from which four rivers originate is the mind's reason from which spring the four virtues—justice, fortitude, prudence and temperance—which render the soil of our heart fertile. The tree of life represents the mother of all good, that is wisdom, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the transgression of the law and the experience of misery. Just as within the soul of the saintly person there is the *species paradisi*, by contrast, within the reprobate there is the confusion of hell, where the devil lives:

> The hateful mind, full of desire, only given to worldly concerns, inflamed with the fire of lust: does it not seem to you to be hell, in which, that is, the devil lives, and in which the fires of desire never cease to burn? There from lust a stench of sulphur arises and from the dark obscurity of its ever-increasing thoughts as it were volumes of the most repulsive smoke are generated. For, while it loves this, it fears that, it rejoices in other things, it hates this, it desires that avidly. The unhappy mind is always mistrustful and unsettled, curious, anxious as well as restless; driven by its cares it is divided in many directions, and bitten to pieces by its opposing passions.[37]

For some authors in the twelfth century, the monastic way of reading and tropological exegesis will inform monastic formation in an unprecedented way: the days of creation, or the exodus out of Egypt will come to figure prominently in the works of Hugh of Saint-Victor and Richard of Saint-Victor as a model to mimetically explore one's own inner life. Whereas in these later authors different

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[36] *Epistola* 49: 'Hoc hominis templum spiritalis est paradisus, mens scilicet sancta, mens perfecta, mens munda, atque ad sui conditoris imaginem signanter expressa. Haec, inquam, mens sive rationalis anima iure dicitur paradisus, quae et caelestium karismatum est fluentis irrigua, et tamquam fertilium arborum vel herbarum sic virentibus sanctarum virtutum vernat germinibus adhornata' (Reindel, II, p. 70, l. 24 – p. 71, l. 2).

[37] *Epistola* 49: 'Mens enim odiosa, cupida, curis tantummodo saecularibus dedita, libidinis igne succensa nonne tibi videtur infernus, in quo videlicet et diabolus habitat, et concupiscentiarum ignes estuare non cessant? Illic enim de luxuria sulphureus foetor oboritur et de cogitationum crebrescentium tenebrosa caligine tamquam teterrimi fumi volumina generantur. Nam dum hoc amat, illud timet, in aliis gaudet, hoc odit, illud avide concupiscit. Fit infelix mens suspecta semper et vaga, curiosa, anxia simul atque sollicita, quae curis impellentibus in multa dividitur diversarumque passionum morsibus laceratur' (Reindel, II, p. 71, ll. 14–23).

states will be presented as different aspects or moments in one person, in Peter's discussion of the Sabbath, the two perspectives are starkly opposed, as if they are about different people. Peter does not offer the pedagogical perspective of development, but of a choice between two alternatives. In the following, Peter keeps alternating the opposite perspectives, represented by Israel and Egypt, or the king of Babylon and Zedekiah. With common exegetical flexibility, the perspective of the community of individual believers to whom Peter appeals is combined with the level of salvation history when Naaman, the captain of the host of Syria (II Kings 5), is said to signify the human race, which, just as Naaman was washed seven times in the Jordan and was cleansed of his leprosy, cast off sin after baptism; the earth, which Naaman begged for, is the incarnation, which is mystically the Promised Land of milk and honey. In this land, the reader must worship God according to God's laws. Here the risk of deception transpires. I shall return to this issue later in this chapter. What becomes clear at this point is that deception is predicated on the distinction between outer and inner:

> He is seen to worship God according to his own law, who certainly obeys his commands as far as appearances are concerned. But in what he does, he considers mainly his own advantages, and while he outwardly presents the example of Christianity, he covers himself perhaps under the colour of honesty, but inwardly he aspires to prosper in this life.[38]

On the contrary, we worship God according to his law, once we know what he wills and neglect our own wishes, and 'if we do not embrace the dead metal of money, but hide the living stone (I Peter 2. 4–5) in the purse of our heart'. After these digressions Peter finds his way back to the paradise and temple with which he began, combining them into an apocalyptic city:

> If not the ornaments of jewels glow on our clothes, but the pearls of virtues in our mind. If in our hearts shines the glass of purity and the gold of health-bringing wisdom, so that it is like that city, about which in the Apocalypse is said by John: *The building of the wall was from iaspis-stone and the city itself from pure gold like pure glass. The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every sort of precious stone* (Revelation 21. 18–19). The soul that is such, is doubtless a paradise, it is that garden of delight whose indweller is God. When it enjoys the contemplation of its Creator, it is reformed to that dignity in which the first man was created.[39]

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[38] *Epistola* 49: 'Secundum propriam quippe legem Deum colere cernitur, qui specietenus quidem eius mandatis optemperat. Sed in his, quae facit, ad propriae utilitatis commodum principaliter spectat, et dum exteriorem christianitatis exhibet regulam, sub honestatis quidem colore se palliat, sed ad hoc intrinsecus, ut in hac vita prosperetur, anhelat' (Reindel, II, p. 76, ll. 3–8).

[39] *Epistola* 49: 'Si non in vestibus hornamenta gemmarum sed in mentibus rutilent margarita virtutum. Si in cordibus nostris et puritatis vitrum et sapientiae salutaris resplendeat aurum, ut illam iam imitetur civitatem, de qua in Apocalipsi per Iohannem dicitur: *Structura*

In this passage, the *homo interior* is not an aspect of man which is always there, but its creation occurs in the process of reading. Within Pauline notions and with the help of exegetical procedures that are rather traditional, the human heart is compared to a paradise and a temple, and contemplation is mentioned as a matter-of-fact result. Twelfth-century authors will use architectural metaphors of, for example, the temple or tabernacle, to exploit the possibilities which such metaphors offer as analogies for the building-process. They will also explore *contemplatio* in a more dynamic manner: as part of a long epistemological process. In Peter, as the last quotation indicates, *contemplatio* evokes a splendorous stillness. The same stillness is achieved by another method recommended by Peter to his readers, when he presents them with the exemplary lives of holy hermits.

Models of Life

Peter constantly uses biblical examples and biblical language. Although he often adopts biblical persons as vehicles to illustrate what he wants to say, in many of his letters Peter presents his readers, not with a model in the form of a sustained biblical exegesis, but rather, as in the letter to Fonte Avellana, in the form of an evocation of the life of model hermits. Thus, when he tries to persuade the hermit Teuzo to give up his life in town, he points to several examples—and first appeals to his reader's conscience:

> Those who seek solitude in towns, as if there are no woods, what else would one believe but that they seek fame and glory rather than the perfection of the solitary life? […] You measure yourself not according to the testimony of your inner knowledge (*conscientia*), but to the opinion of the crowd, who are filled with astonishment at the venal sight of a pale face and when they hear the word fasting.[40]

Conscientia suggests an inner, personal locus of judgement, even if it is not the modern autonomous private authority. Peter offers a yardstick against which Teuzo can measure himself when, in the following passage, he presents the life of his own community and of exemplary hermits as a model, if only to convince Teuzo that he

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muri eius ex lapide iaspide, ipsa vero civitas ex auro mundo simul et vitro mundo. Fundamenta muri civitatis omni lapide pretioso adhornata. Haec igitur anima, quae talis est, proculdubio paradisus est, haec ille deliciarum hortus est, cuius inhabitator est Deus. Quae dum sui conditoris contemplatione perfruitur, ad illam dignitatem, in qua primus homo conditus fuerat, reformatur' (Reindel, II, p. 76, ll. 16–26).

  [40] *Epistola* 44: 'Enimvero qui tamquam deficientibus silvis solitudinem in urbibus quaerunt, quid aliud credendum est, nisi quia solitariae vitae non perfectionem, sed favorem potius et gloriam aucupantur? […] Nec te metiris iuxta testimonium propriae conscientiae, sed secundum opinionem potius assentatricis turbae, apud quam videlicet venalis pallor in vultu et auditum nomen ieiunii stuporem mentibis ingerit' (Reindel, II, p. 13, l. 10 – p. 14, l. 1).

is nothing special: 'If only you were present here, and could see with your own eyes what in these forests is done by unknown men.'[41] Peter begins by citing rather outward practices: frugality in eating, simple clothing, silence, isolation, and abstinence from wine. He then elaborates on several examples. One is Martinus Storacus, a *rusticus idiota*, an example of *sancta simplicitas*. Another is Leo of Sitria, the 'perfect norm of mortification', whose abstinence has resulted in what is an almost immobile icon, 'his face showing an image rather than a bodily living human being'.[42] Other examples follow, the last one being Dominicus Loricatus. Peter calls Dominicus 'my teacher and my lord, whose language may be that of the country, but his life is rather artful and elegant, and his life, edifying others by his living works, preaches more usefully than the sterile language of some, which vainly balances the precise words of fine urbanity'.[43] Peter then explains the rationale for these examples: 'that you may no longer pride yourself about your extraordinariness (*singularitas*)'.[44]

In these model lives the emphasis is on physical ascesis and ascetic championship. The inner life is only hinted at, as when, for example, Peter says that psalm singing (which he combined with extremes of ascetic practices) came easy to Dominicus, because he did not just pronounce the words, but 'read through their meaning with the vividness of the mind',[45] or, as Peter reports Dominicus saying, that psalm singing goes fast 'if the heart keeps at the words, if what the tongue speaks, the mind comprehends vigorously, otherwise if the heart wanders around, the course of the psalms is only slowly brought to an end, the tongue now failing, now growing lukewarm'.[46] It is not only the need for penance which lies behind the

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[41] *Epistola* 44: 'Sed o utinam praesens adesses, et quid in his silvis ab ignotis atque despectis agatur, oculo iudicante perpenderes!' (Reindel, II, p. 14, ll. 10–11).

[42] *Epistola* 44: 'Hic nempe perfectae mortificationis est norma, hic singularis vitae regula, hic ad perfectionis apicem festinantibus imitabilis disciplina […] Rigor autem abstinentiae in eo tantus est, ut in eius facie imago potius quam viventis hominis corpulentia videatur' (Reindel, II, p. 17, ll. 12–14, p. 18, ll. 11–12).

[43] *Epistola* 44: 'Dominicum dico, doctorem videlicet et dominum meum, cuius quidem lingua rustica est, sed vita artificiosa satis et lepida, quae sane vita satis utilius ad aedificationem vivis operibus praedicat, quam sterilis quorundam lingua, quae accurata faleratae urbanitatis verba inaniter trutinat' (Reindel, II, p. 21, ll. 8–12).

[44] *Epistola* 44: 'Superiora tibi, Teuzo pater, exempla proposui, ut desinas de singularitate tumescere' (Reindel, II, p. 31, ll. 18–19). In several other letters Peter will repeat these sorts of examples. Compare *Epistolae* 50, 66, 109. See also the *Vita beati Romualdi*.

[45] *Epistola* 109: 'Psalmodia sane illi idcirco tam facile provenit, quia non tam verba, ut ipse asserit, lingua perstrepente revolvit, quam sensum mentis vivacitate percurrit' (Reindel, III, p. 212, ll. 22–24).

[46] *Epistola* 109: 'Hoc mihi sepe dicebat: In hoc psalmodia provenit cito psallenti, si cor ad verba teneat, si quod lingua loquitur, mens vivaciter comprehendat, alioquin si cor vagatur,

rigorous ascesis, as Peter explains to counter criticism of the hermit's harsh practices of flagellation, but, more importantly, identification with Christ and the apostles and martyrs.[47] When he writes a *Vita* of Dominicus for Pope Alexander, after relating the hermit's death, Peter tells that 'our Dominicus in his body was bearing the marks (*stigmata*) of Jesus' (compare Galatians 6. 17).[48] Compared with the perspective in his exegesis of Creation and its parallel in the composing of the human mind, a perspective of inwardness is only vaguely hinted at in these examples.

Most of these models are part of a more general guide to the eremitical or monastic life. The letter to Fonte Avellana (*Letter* 18) is, in fact, such a program. Other examples are Peter's letters to novices in the eremitical life, like Stephanus (*Letter* 50), or his nephew Marinus (*Letter* 132). In a letter, most probably to the Abbot of Pomposa, Mainardus (*Letter* 153), he develops a model of monastic life, and his letter to two hermits, Albizo and Peter (*Letter* 165), for all its criticism of contemporary monasticism and eremitism, also contains a standard of these forms of life. In these letters Peter does not offer strict rules.[49] Rather, the letters are meant to encourage personal imitation, for which examples are better than precepts. To Stephanus, Peter says:

> May it thus suffice, to explain simply what we see happening in our community, and what we have experienced. We do not so much prescribe by some general decree what should be done by hermits, as relate what happens in this particular hermitage, as regards place as well as persons. And we think that it will not be unfruitful to those who read this with love, for precepts may admonish on the way to the highest perfection, but examples compel.[50]

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psalmorum cursus ad finem lingua nunc fallente nunc tepescente tarde perducitur' (Reindel, III, p. 217, ll. 14–18).

[47] *Epistola* 44: 'Devotio sancta fidelium cum se pro peccatorum suorum memoria verberibus afficit, communicare se sui redemptoris passionibus credit. Nam et ipse salvator noster evangelio teste flagellis caesus est, et apostoli in conspectu concilii verberibus sunt affecti, et Paulus quinquies quadragenas una minus accepit. Quod etiam innumeri martyres duris subiacuere verberibus, cui vacat eorum historias legere, non poterit ignorare. Ab illis ergo et hunc paenitentiae modum nos suscaepisse gaudemus, a quibus nimirum omnium studiorum spiritalium instrumenta didicimus' (Reindel, II, p. 22, l. 20 – p. 23, l. 5).

[48] *Epistola* 109: 'Dominicus autem noster stigmata Iesu portavit in corpore' (Reindel, III, p. 222, ll. 25–26).

[49] Lohmer, *Heremi conversatio*, p. 125.

[50] *Epistola* 50: 'Sufficiat autem, quod in nostra fieri congregatione conspicimus, et experti sumus simpliciter explicare. Nec tam quid ab heremitis fieri debeat, generali definitione praescribimus, quam quid in hac heremo fiat, cum de loco tum personae specialiter intimamus. Quod tamen ex caritate legentibus infructuosum esse non credimus, cum ad perfectionis culmen praecepta quidem moneant, sed exempla compellant' (Reindel, II, p. 80, ll. 15–20).

It is thus the example of individual lives, or of the life of a community, which is informing the reader. One should not encourage too much leniency, but there is room to allow for personal traits. After having enumerated the ascetic practices as they are exercised in Peter's community, Peter urges his reader to assess his own capacities:

> Put before your eyes these things which I have shown you about the way of life of our brothers, to look at it carefully. Gauge your strength in the balance of strict self-examination, so that whether you sink down or go upward, as you continuously observe the marks of this oft-trodden road, you absolutely cannot err through tortuous side-ways. A painter, you know, places the picture to be copied before the sheet of parchment he is using, reducing everything to the size of the painting he holds in his hand, and composes his piece according to the lines of the borrowed work. You too, just as much, according to the measure of strength which the bestower of heavenly gifts has imparted to you, seize upon these things for yourself thus to train yourself, that you know, how much you must necessarily reduce these things, or how much you can augment them in you through the increase of grace.[51]

The reader is thus urged to make his own 'painting'. Peter uses a similar artistic comparison in his letter to his nephew. Marinus should present, in his mind, different brothers to himself, and combine the best qualities of each, and so 'inform' himself into an exemplar of good things. Peter cites the example of the classical painter Zeuxis from Heraclea, who, according to Cicero's *De inventione*, took several models to compose a painting of the goddess Diana. Peter tells the story 'so that you will choose a few from many, according to whose guidelines you will strive to picture the beauty of the inner man'. From the one he will pick obedience, from the other charity, and so on. 'As the painter transferred the appearances of different bodies into the shape of one picture, so you too, from the various virtues of holy men, must restore in yourself the image of the one true God.'[52] Thus, the reader will

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[51] *Epistola* 50: 'Haec itaque, dilectissime fili, quae de fratrum nostrorum tibi conversatione protulimus, diligenter intuenda prae oculis pone. Vires etiam tuas velut in statera districtae examinationis appende, ut sive subsidas, sive magis emineas, dum triti metam iugiter contemplaris itineris, per anfractuum diverticula prorsus oberrare non possis. Nam et pictor imaginem compilationis gratia sibimet pro sceda constituit, qui tamen ad mensuram tabulae, quae versatur in manibus, omnia redigit, et huic coaptata mutuati operis liniamenta componit. Tu etiam nichilominus iuxta modum virium, quem tibi caelestium carismatum largitor infuderit, haec tibi sic in exercitium arripe, ut noveris, quantum cogaris ex necessitate minuere, vel quantum haec in te per accessum gratiae possis augere' (Reindel, II, p. 99, ll. 12–22). On this sort of advice as an appeal to self-knowledge compare Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même de Socrate à Saint Bernard*, I (1974), 237.

[52] *Epistola* 132: 'Sed quorsum haec tam longa narratione protracta? Nimirum ut et tu ex pluribus paucos eligas, ad quorum normam interioris hominis pulchritudinem effigiare contendas […] Quatinus sicut ille diversorum corporum habitudines ad unius simulacri speciem transtulit, sic et tu ex variis sanctorum virorum virtutibus unius in te veri Dei

make himself into a work of art and an example for others to follow, just as the *imago* which Leo of Sitria had become.

These letters are not exact rules, yet nor are they strictly meant for formative meditation—as were the exegetical letters discussed before, and as are many of the works I will discuss in later chapters. Rather, they combine exemplary descriptions of eremitical practices and indications about the way to manage one's inner life—a way in which exegetical meditations may play a role, as we shall see. They promote a personal effort, within the framework of the *Regula Benedicti* as a binding rule, including, in Peter's opinion, its assessment of the priority of the hermit's life.[53] The writers discussed in later chapters also recommend emulating saints and exemplary lives. However, this relatively 'external' pedagogical mode is integrated within a much more introspective approach. In Peter Damian, by contrast, it is connected with his strong sense of religious life as an ongoing struggle, best waged in solitude. Before returning to Peter's perspective on the inner life, we need to discuss what, in his view, are the conditions for this life.

Militance and Seclusion

In Peter's letters, the eremitical and monastic life is presented first and foremost as a spiritual combat. This notion is, of course, traditional, but, in Peter's view, it pervades the life of the hermit and monk from the beginning to the end, in the inner as well as in the outer aspects of life. Peter's letter to his nephew begins with the notion of the *divina militia*:[54] 'The unskilled recruit is easily thrown to the ground in the first encounter of war, unless he is first, by way of the commander, carefully instructed.'[55] In the heavenly militia, healthy advice is even more urgent. In *Letter* 153, where he develops one of his depictions of the ideal monastic life, Peter admonishes the readers in the same vein, and warns that perseverance is essential: what is gained in the beginning can be jeopardized at the last moment:

> Therefore, dearest ones, bring yourselves together in strength with the help of Christ, and perform his military service, under whose arms you have sworn your allegiance, not torpidly, not weakly, but ardently and manly, so that the first proofs of your way of life, which are put yet in some middle place, do not, far from it, return to nothing by

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restaures imaginem, ut ad eundem postmodum feliciter cognoscendus revertaris auctorem' (Reindel, III, p. 447, ll. 26–28; p. 448, ll. 1–5).

[53] Lohmer, *Heremi conversatio*, p. 134.

[54] On the notion of Christian *militia* see, for example, Johann Auer, art. 'Militia Christi', in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, X (Paris: Beauchesne, 1980), cols 1210–1223.

[55] *Epistola* 132: 'Rudis tiro facile in prima belli congressione prosternitur, nisi adhibito prius campidoctoris officio diligentius informetur' (Reindel, III, p. 439, ll. 6–7).

negligence, but increase through the insistance of constant fervour to the summit of perfection.[56]

The fragility of it all shines through again, this time evoked by an unborn child: 'For what is the benefit, if the body starts growing in the mother's womb, and yet does not attain the fullness of natural growth?'[57]

Though, in these works, the ascetic emphasis is very strong, the inner man receives much more attention than in the exemplary 'Lives' of individual hermits which Peter inserted in some letters, and the combat against the body is really centered in the mind. As Peter tells Stephanus:

> Whoever, then, enters the cell to fight with the devil, and feels the urge in the arena of spiritual combat of an eager and ardent heart, let him direct all his mind's attention to this, that he does not feel any longer the pleasure of the flesh, not even for a moment, but lives as if dead to himself as well as to the world. Let him prepare his mind to bear misfortune and misery, let him offer himself to death for Christ, let him gird the loins of his mind with the various weapons of virtues, let him imagine all difficult and hard things, so that when they happen, he does not fail weakly, off guard, but tolerates everything patiently.[58]

With many comparisons Peter explains how, in the struggle in which the hermit is fighting, it is best to resist from the beginning, and then what is difficult in the beginning, will become easier. Once the fighter has triumphed in the beginning, he will be much more difficult to attack later. The devil knows this and concentrates his efforts on beginners:

> Clearly, just as a river begins ever so small from the origin of its spring, but becomes broader as during its long course downwards streams from here and there flow into it, so our inner man begins thinly and as it were dry on the journey of holy life, but slowly gains in strength through the increase of virtues as if streams come together from everywhere. Whoever thus endeavours to restrain the river in its flow,

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[56] *Epistola* 153: 'Quapropter, karissimi, in vires vos Christo auxiliante colligite, eiusque militiam, in cuius arma iurastis, non segniter, non enerviter, sed fervide potius ac viriliter baiulate, ut rudimenta conversationis vestrae, quae adhuc in quodam meditullio posita sunt, non ad nichilum, quod absit, per neglegentiam redeant, sed per continui fervoris instantiam ad perfectionis culmen excrescant' (Reindel, IV, p. 15, ll. 12–17).

[57] *Epistola* 153: 'Quid enim prodest, si in materno utero formari corpus incipiat, et tamen ad naturalis incrementi plenitudinem non contingat?' (Reindel, IV, p. 15, ll. 23–25).

[58] *Epistola* 50: 'Quisquis igitur cellulam cum diabolo dimicaturus ingreditur, et in harena spiritalis praelii ferventis animositate pectoris incitatur, ad hoc totam suae mentis intentionem dirigat, ut delectationem carnis vel ad momentum quidem iam ultra non sentiat, sed sibimet simul et mundo mortuus vivat. Ad tolerandas itaque calamitates atque miserias animum praeparet, morti se pro Christo devoveat, diversis virtutum telis lumbos mentis accingat, omnia sibimet aspera et dura proponat, ut cum acciderint, non inprovidus enerviter concidat, sed omnia aequanimiter ferat' (Reindel, II, p. 84, ll. 11–18).

necessarily tries to heap together obstacles near the source of the spring, so that where one sees not yet a river but just a little stream, it is easily checked by some blockages thrown in.[59]

The need for continuous effort and perseverance is emphasized in Peter's letter to Mainardus. If you need to pay a hundred pounds to get access to the king, ninety, however worthy, will not do. Leaving the world behind is not enough. Obedience, charity, peace, patience, make up the rest. Again, this is an interior affair as much as physical mortification, or rather, physical mortification is rooted in mental effort:

> I will shortly touch upon how your mind can adhere to this more easily and thus more closely. It is nothing but a fervour for God, and mortification in yourself. If the word of the apostle would live in us, where he says: *always carrying in the body the death* (mortificatio) *of Jesus* (II Corinthians 4.10), as carnal love will not find a place to diffuse itself, all our desire will necessarily transfer itself to God, and our passion will be exiled, as it will not have space inside us to diffuse itself.[60]

The view implied here of the mind as a space is then combined with the view of necessary defense: 'For truly, the prudent man, always intent on guarding his salvation, always is thus vigilant in repressing his vices, that he girds his loins and his reins with the girdle of perfect mortification', repressing his gluttony, setting his tongue to silence, closing his ears to distracting talk, blinding his eyes to illicit sights, staying his hand from cruelty, his feet from vagabonding, his heart from envying others' happiness, not surrendering to avarice, avoiding anger, arrogance, luxury, and extremes of sadness or joy.[61]

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[59] *Epistola* 50: 'Plane sicut fluvius ex sui fontis origine perexiguus oritur, sed processu longioris declivii rivis hinc inde confluentibus dilatatur, sic interior homo noster in sanctae conversationis itinere tenuis et velut aridus incipit, paulatim vero per incrementa virtutum quasi rivis undique concurrentibus convalescit. Quisquis ergo nititur amnis fluenta restringere, iuxta fontis aditum necesse est satagat obstacula convectare, ut ubi nondum amnis sed adhuc rivulus cernitur, illic obicibus inpactis facile reprimatur' (Reindel, II, p. 84, l. 19 – p. 85, l. 3).

[60] *Epistola* 153: 'Sed volo compendiose perstringere, quo menti vestrae valeat facilius ac per hoc artius inherere. Itaque nichil est aliud nisi fervor in Deum et mortificatio in temetipsum. Si enim apostolica in nobis sententia viveret, qua dicit: *Semper mortificationem Ihesu in corpore nostro circumferentes*, quia carnalis amor non haberet, ubi se intra nostra diffunderet, necessario se omnis nostra delectatio in Deum suspensa transferret, et illic noster ignis exiliens viveret, quia intra nos diffundendi se spatium non haberet' (Reindel, IV, p. 17, ll. 4–11).

[61] *Epistola* 153: 'Prudens etenim vir et ad salutis custodiam vehementer intentus, tanta reprimendis vitiis sollicitudine semper invigilat, ut perfecte mortificationis cingulo lumbos suos et renes, ventrum una cum lateribus undique circumstringat. Quod nimirum tunc fit, cum pruriens gula reprimitur, cum lingua procax sub silentio cohibetur, cum auris a detractionibus clauditur, cum oculus aspectare quae sunt inlicita prohibetur, cum retinetur manus ne crudeliter feriat, pes ne vagabundus inaniter pergat, cum resistitur cordi ne prosperis alienae felicitatis invideat, ne quod suum non est per avaritiam concupiscat, ne se ab amore fraterno

Although Peter has admitted, in his letters to various lay people, that a religious life is possible without physically retreating from the world, in his letters to hermits the hermit's physical seclusion is a necessary condition for his combat. The hermit's seclusion is either taken for granted, as in the letter to Stephanus, who has just given up the broad way of monasticism for the narrowness of the cell; or it is the first demand, for example when Peter tries to convince Teuzo of the error of his ways, when Teuzo thinks he can be a hermit while dwelling in a town. Peter does not develop a notion of inner solitude, which would become more important in the twelfth century—though it was already formulated in the eleventh century by Anselm and John of Fécamp and their followers: 'In whatever crowd you are, you can be alone spiritually, as long as you don't want to explore or make yourself the judge of somebody else's way of life'.[62]

For Peter, disobeying the first condition of physical withdrawal from the world is a great danger. This danger is the main subject of Peter's complaint about contemporary monasticism in his letter to the hermits Albizo and Peter. 'On the contempt of this world […] we often used to talk as you know, with some friendly zeal, and we would lament our own imperfection in these things as well as complain even about some brothers of this holy military service who wander around defiantly.'[63] In his explanation as to why the monk's desire for money—usually the reason for his wanderings—cannot be combined with his monastic profession, Peter again employs his notion of the inner life as a space, or a container: an inner room.

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per iracundiam dividat, ne se super ceteros arroganter extollat, ne titillanti luxuriae ex delectatione consentiat, ne se vel in merorem immoderatius deprimat, vel letitia lenocinante resolvat' (Reindel, IV, p. 17, ll. 11–22).

[62] 'In quantacumque multitudine sis, sola esse potes spiritu, si alienae conuersationis non es aut curiosa exploratrix aut temeraria iudex', as quoted in Gillian R. Evans, 'Mens Devota: The Literary Community of the Devotional Works of John of Fécamp and St. Anselm', *Medium Aevum,* 43 (1974), 105–115 (p. 110). On the notion in the twelfth century see Giles Constable, 'The Ideal of Inner Solitude in the Twelfth Century', in Giles Constable, *Culture and Spirituality in Medieval Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996), XI, pp. 27–34, first published in *Horizons marins: Itinéraires spirituels. Ve – XVIIIe siècles (Mélanges Michel Mollat)*, ed. by Henri Dubois, Jean-Claude Hocquet and André Vauchez (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1987).

[63] *Epistola* 165: 'De contemptu saeculi huius, fratres karissimi, Albizo videlicet venerabilis heremita, et Petre de mundi rhetore iam Christi philosophe, sepe, ut nostis, familiari quodam studio disputare soliti, tum de nostra ipsorum inperfectione doluimus, tum etiam de nonnullis huius sacrae militiae fratribus per abrupta vagantibus conquesti sumus' (Reindel, IV, p. 173, l. 27 – p. 174, l. 3).

The Inner Room

The notion of the mind as a room, or a receptacle, to be filled with the right content, frequently colours Peter's view of the inner life. Monks who have renounced the world and still think they can have money, should consider that Christ and money cannot be in the same receptacle:

> Why, O monk, do you wish to keep Christ in your purse? First throw out the money, for they cannot be suitably joined together in one receptacle, because if you will have included both at the same time, you, empty possessor, will find the one without the other. Indeed, the richer you will be in the poor wealth of the world, the more miserable you will be, empty in true riches. Thus if there is money, let somebody else claim it at once, that Christ will find the chest of your heart empty. Certainly a great guest seeks to enter into your humble lodgings, and therefore he wants to reside there alone and without having to share the place with other fellows. Since the vastness of heaven and earth cannot contain him, how will you endeavor to bring strange companions to him to live together in the small corner of your house?[64]

In another metaphor, the mind is a room, the walls of which are painted. It catches the images of the things which, in assiduous meditation, the mind turns over and, depending on whether it meditates about vain or about useful things, the room is painted with different images and can be seen either as the earth or as heaven and a temple of God.[65] The adversary is also a clever painter, who tries to occupy the walls of the mind with his pernicious images. The antidote is to stay away from bad

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[64] *Epistola* 165: 'Quapropter, o monache, vis in tuo loculo recondere Christum? Excute prius nummum, neque enim in uno receptaculo congrue sotiantur, nam si utrumque simul incluseris, alterum sine altero vacuus possessor invenies. Quanto quippe in egenis mundi lucris copiosior fueris, tanto a veris divitiis erumpnosius inanescis. Nummus ergo si est, in aliena protinus iura concedat, ut vacuam tui pectoris arcam Christus inveniat. Magnus nempe hospes in diversorii tui quaerit angusta descendere, atque idcirco solus vult et sine consortibus habitare. Quem enim caeli terraeque non valet vastitas capere, quo pacto in exiguo tui domatis angulo niteris illi peregrinos ad cohabitandum socios adhibere?' (Reindel, IV, p. 178, ll. 5–14).

[65] *Epistola* 97: 'Cor denique sacerdotis Dei templum, Christi debet esse sacrarium, non certe, sicut legitur, spelunca latronum, vel sordentis pecuniae receptaculum. Hoc enim unaquaeque mens in divino deputatur examine, quod versat per concupiscentiam in cogitatione […] Quod enim versatur in mente, tanquam depictum cernitur in pariete. Et mens ipsa earum rerum imagines contrahit, quas sedula meditatione revolvit, et tanquam diversis actionum imaginibus pingitur, prout vana vel utilia meditatur […]. Sic, sic humana mens dum terrena meditatur et infima, proculdubio terra conspicitur, cum vero, quae pietatis sunt, tractat, cum divina cogitat atque caelestia, merito caelum templum Dei videtur atque sacrarium' (Reindel, III, p. 79, ll. 11–15; p. 80, ll. 4–12).

images: 'It is easy to bring back to memory things one has seen, but hardly possible to form the lines of unknown images on the walls of our mind'.[66]

Man's heart as a receptacle, or room, is implied in an important aspect of Peter's view of the inner life which we saw before, when he recommended the memory of Christ's *mortificatio*, so that 'carnal love will not find a place to diffuse itself'.[67] Peter repeatedly explains how the human mind cannot stay vacant: it has to be occupied by the love of one thing or another. This notion, important for example in Cassian, is exploited by Peter Damian in his advice to his readers. Thus he concluded in his letter to Mainardus, after insisting that the reader girds his loins with mortification and represses the various vices:

> As the human mind cannot stay vacant at all, so that it does not occupy itself with the love of just anything, once it is everywhere surrounded by this wall of virtues, then as it is nowhere allowed to spread itself around itself, it will necessarily be carried above itself. When thus in this way our mind has begun to find rest in its author, and to taste from that sweetness of inner delight, soon it rejects whatever it judges to be contrary to divine law, abhors whatever is at odds with the supreme rule of justice. […] One does not delight in vain fables, does not consent to spread empty words, but concentrates on psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, and seeks remoteness.[68]

This view of how the mind works is also behind the meditations Peter offered in his exegesis of Creation. It is the reason Peter offers in answer to the question of a certain monk, called Adam, who had asked about what was there before the creation of the world and what will happen after the Last Judgement. Peter replies that, even though these matters cannot be explained, it is fruitful to enquire, because it keeps the mind engaged in useful meditation:

> The human mind is of such a nature, that it cannot stay vacant from thoughts, and it engages either in serious things, or delights in vanities, and as long as it meditates about useful things, it is guarded against bad thoughts breaking in. Nor does depravity have a place for its whisperings, where the mind, intent on useful things, keeps strict counsel with sober thinking. Thus it is worthwhile, indeed useful, to consider how short is the space of transitory time compared with the ever lasting eternity. For if we

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[66] *Epistola* 132: 'Versutus namque adversarius pictor est. Sed qui facile quidem possit ad memoriam visa reducere, vix autem in parietibus mentis nostrae ignotarum nobis spetierum liniamenta formare' (Reindel, III, p. 443, ll. 9–11).

[67] *Epistola* 153 (Reindel, IV, p. 17, ll. 8–9). See above, note 60.

[68] *Epistola* 153: 'Quia igitur humana mens penitus vacare non valet, ut cuiuslibet rei se amore non occupet, cum hoc virtutum muro undique circumcluditur, quia se circa se nequaquam dilatare permittitur, supra se necesse est rapiatur. Hoc itaque modo cum mens nostra in suo ceperit auctore quiescere, et ex illa iam dulcedinis intime suavitate gustare, mox quicquid divinae legi iudicat esse contrarium, respuit, quicquid a supernae iustitiae regula discrepat, abhorrescit. […] Itaque iam non fabularum gaudet ineptiis, non otiosis acquiescit diffluere verbis, sed psalmis, hymnis et canticis spiritalibus vacat, remotionem querit' (Reindel, IV, p.17, l. 22 – p. 18, l. 5).

want to compare that time-space of immeasurable magnitude where God was before the origin of this world, as well as where he will remain after the end of this same world, with this tiny little time that is from the beginning of the world till the end of the world, the result of this comparison is smaller than if you throw a handful of water in the sea or try to compare one cubit with the whole space of the earth.[69]

These considerations are not serving some academic interest. They help to focus the reader on eternal things, and urge him to consider that earthly things should be despised, and that man will either receive eternal rewards or be punished with everlasting punishment.[70] After recommending the works of the Fathers, Augustine, Jerome, and the Apocalypse and its commentaries, and discussing popular traditions of Doomsday, Peter repeats why it is useful to meditate upon these things: 'You, then, venerable brother, meditate on these and similar things, practise the talent of your mind incessantly in them, so that while you turn them around within your conscience, you, intent on serious things, exclude the follies of vain thinking'.[71] The cosmological considerations which Peter presented as useful barriers to vain thoughts may be rather extreme, but they are assimilated in a notion of intimacy, or its absence, when Peter explains how vain thoughts find their way into the human heart:

Vain thoughts come forth from the coldness of the heart, that is, when the mind after the ardour for the true bridegroom grows lukewarm, and as it were runs after other

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[69] *Epistola* 92: 'Humana quippe mens huiusmodi nature est, ut a cogitationibus vacare non possit, aut enim se exercet in seriis aut delectatur in vanis, et donec utilia meditatur, ab ingruentium cogitationum irruptione defenditur. Nec pravitas habet insusurrandi locum, ubi mens utilibus rebus intenta strictum tenet cum sobria cogitatione consilium. Igitur opere pretium est et satis utile cogitare, quam breve sit spatium transitorii temporis ad comparationem evi iugiter permanentis. Nam si conferre volumus illud inmense magnitudinis spatium, quo Deus extitit ante mundi huius originem, illud quoque, quo post eiusdem mundi permansurus est finem, cum hoc tantillo tempore, quod est ab initio mundi usque ad finem mundi, minor est hec comparatio, quam si pugillum aque in mare proicias vel si mensuram cubiti cum toto terrarum spatio conferre contendas' (Reindel, III, p. 15, ll. 5–17).

[70] *Epistola* 92: 'Cum igitur hec et huiusmodi pervigili meditatione discutimus, dum hec subtiliter in cogitatione versamus, non parvus nostre mentis profectus acquiritur, quia, dum meditatur eterna, liquido conspicit, quam despicienda sunt temporalia. Dum hec igitur mens rationalis excogitat, additur etiam, ut semetipsam non cum tempore transituram, sed sine fine victuram esse perpendat. Considerat itaque se huiusmodi esse nature, ut necessario aut perpetuis potiatur praemiis aut suppliciis crucietur eternis' (Reindel, III, p. 16, ll. 4–7).

[71] *Epistola* 92: 'Tu autem, venerabilis frater, haec et huiusmodi sedule meditare, in his ingenium tue mentis indesinenter exerce, ut dum ea intra conscientiam versas, vane cogitationis ineptias seriis intentus excludas' (Reindel, III, p. 24, ll. 8–10).

lovers through the fictions of other thoughts. For as soon as she, out of the embraces of her redeemer, goes out, she wanders forth.[72]

The Priority of the Inner Life

Peter repeated these same cosmological considerations in the letters he wrote to his sisters.[73] In one particular letter, he emphasized that the inner life is distinguished from and valued over outer practices and actions. In this letter, Peter also praises his sisters for the way they lived after the deaths of their husbands. As a model to imprint on themselves as a seal, he offers them the example of the biblical Anna, who, after a marriage of only seven years, had reached the age of eighty-four as a widow (Luke 2.36).[74] He also addresses the inner life directly. For all his praise for their physical continence, Peter emphasizes that this is only part of what they should aspire to:

> Impress, finally, this firmly on your minds, think this over in careful meditation, that it is said: *that you are holy in body and spirit* (I Corinthians 7. 34). For of what benefit is the chastity of the body, chastising or afflicting the flesh, if purity and cleanliness of heart is lacking?[75]

Here Peter, appealing to his own experience, draws attention to the fact that the further one is separated from the world, the more unwanted thoughts are troubling: 'I know well and I have experienced more than enough to know that the farther you withdraw from the business of the world and from a secular way of life, the more grievously you are troubled by the distressing clamour of invading thoughts.'[76] As Peter finds that little remains in the way of good works to recommend to them, he directs his attention to the life of the mind:

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[72] *Epistola* 92: 'Vane ergo cogitationes de cordis frigore prodeunt, cum mens videlicet a veri sponsi fervore tepescit, et quasi post alios amatores per alia cogitacionum figmenta discurrit. Mox enim ut amplexibus soluta sui redemptoris egreditur, errabundis male libera gressibus per titillantium cogitationum illecebras evagatur' (Reindel, III, p. 24, ll. 10–14).

[73] *Epistola* 93 (Reindel, III, pp. 26–30).

[74] *Epistola* 94: 'Hanc itaque egregiam viduam quasi signaculum quoddam vobismetipsis sollerter inprimite' (Reindel, III, p. 33, ll. 16–17).

[75] *Epistola* 94: 'Illud denique artius mentibus vestris infigite, illud sedula meditatione versate, quod dicitur, *ut sit sancta corpore et spiritu*. Quid enim prodest castitas corporis, quid castigatio vel afflictio carnis, si desit puritas et mundicia cordis?' (Reindel, III, p. 34, ll. 12–15).

[76] *Epistola* 94: 'Novi sane et satis superque expertus sum, quia quo remotius a mundi negociis vel saeculari conversatione seceditis, eo molestius importuno cogitationum ingruentium strepitu laboratis' (Reindel, III, p. 34, ll. 18–21).

My beloved ones, the life you lead on consideration is so saintly, so respectable and rigorous, that it does not seem to need our exhortation at all as far as works are concerned. Therefore, so that our pen still finds some occasion for your edification, we return to the hidden depths of the mind, where necessarily the more eminent one is in virtues, the more subtle she should be in guarding against temptation. For the shrewd enemy often turns into a material for combat the very thing that was made the cause of victory. Besides, almighty God himself lives in the minds of the elect. Although indeed one has to believe that he also lives in chaste bodies, as the apostle says: *your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God* (I Corinthians 6. 19), his special seat is assigned to the mind, which by some guiding authority governs the subjected body. [...] Thus if you want to build a room worthy of God in your minds, then desire ardently to free your minds from all fuel of enmity and hate, from all blemish of spite.[77]

Again, in Peter's view, there is no place for half-heartedness, but then the goal is the intimacy of the *cubiculum*, where the inner thoughts form the bridal bed for the heavenly spouse:

Certainly, if someone is going to welcome a king in his house, what good is it if he fits all the rooms of the house with various reliefs, if he hangs curtains of fine linen from the panelled roofs, if he shows the guest on his arrival everything surely clean and shiny, but in the bedroom, where the guest enters to rest, he finds the place dirty and he recoils. As you guard your bodies in holy cleanliness by insistent and assiduous prayer, by almost daily fasting, by the splendour of your womanly chastity, always be concerned also about your thoughts. To construct a bedchamber for your heavenly spouse in your mind, let there be nothing foul, nothing inordinate, that could offend his eyes.[78]

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[77] *Epistola* 94: 'Quia igitur, dilectissimae, vita vestra tam sancta, tam honesta tamque districta esse perpenditur, ut quantum ad opera nequaquam nostrae exhortationis indiga videatur, ut tamen et nostro stilo quilibet in aedificatione vestra pateat locus, ad ipsa mentis archana recurrimus, ubi necesse est, ut quanto quis fuerit in virtutibus eminentior, tanto sit in cavenda tentatione subtilior. Callidus enim hostis idipsum saepe vertit in materiam pugnae, quod factum est causa victoriae. Huc accedit, quod ipse omnipotens Deus in mentibus habitat electorum. Licet enim et in castis corporibus habitare credendus sit, dicente apostolo: *Corpus vestrum templum in vobis est Spiritus sancti quem habetis a Deo*, menti tamen specialis eius sedes asscribitur, quae subiecto corpori quadam regiminis auctoritate principatur. [...] Si igitur in mentibus vestris dignum Deo vultis cubile construere, studiose contendite ipsas mentes omni simultatis et odiorum fomite, omni denique malitiae labe purgare' (Reindel, III, p. 35, l. 27 – p. 36, l. 8).

[78] *Epistola* 94: 'Regem sane quis excepturus hospitio, quid prodest, si tota domus atria diversis toreumatibus instruat, si per laquearia quaeque carbasina vela suspendat, si omnia certe munda et nitida oculis adventantis exhibeat, solum autem cubiculum, ubi ille requieturus ingreditur, sordidum reperiens perhorrescat? Quia ergo vos per assiduae orationis instantiam, per cotidiana fere ieiunia, per candorem pudiciciae matronalis corpora vestra in sancta munditia custoditis, erga cogitationes quoque districtam semper sollicitudinem exhibete. Ut

The mind and its devout activities become a place of concentration, and a refuge from the world.[79] Even the gift of tears, which Peter often emphasizes as part of the religious life, can be internalized.[80]

The emphasis on the importance of the inner life and the distinction between outer and inner practices returns in other letters. The distance between outer appearance and true religion is part of what Peter sees as the deficiency of his time: 'And so you are not ignorant, my brothers, what I can only say sighingly, into what failure of holy ardour our order has fallen […], so that we […] seem content with the mere clothes of this profession. Under the pretence of religion we live in a secular way.'[81] However much rhetoric there is behind this letter (to an abbot who probably shared Peter's ideas), the distinction implies a separate inner realm—again, often represented as an inner space where divine presence is indicated by the bridal metaphors of the Canticle. As we have seen before, however, the distinction of an inner domain entails the possibility of discrepancies between inner and outer.

Deception and Distinction

Outer behaviour, on its own, is inadequate and its inherent deceptiveness is the object of Peter's criticism of contemporary eremitism in *Letter* 165. Here the *homo interior* is differentiated from, or contrasted with, outer practices. Opposed to secular treasures or earthly harvests are the treasures of the inner mind. Peter ends a series of comparisons regarding its inner treasure—as storing places abounding with gold and silver, as cellaries and granaries overflowing with grain—by calling it a ring of faith, the armlets of perfect work in the active life, the bracelets of speculative contemplation. In the midst of his verbal violence against the cult of money he thus implies again the intimacy of the Canticle-verse: 'For his left hand is

quoniam caelesti sponso thalamum in vestra mente construitis, nil ibi foedum esse, nichil inordinatum, quod eius oculos possit offendere, permittatis' (Reindel, III, p. 36, ll. 9–18).

[79] See for example *Epistola* 94: 'Igitur, dilectissimae, cum vobis ex huius mundi turbinibus frementior tempestas ingruerit, cum illata ab adversariis iniuria vos contumeliosa percellit, orationis illico latibulum petite, ad fletus et lamenta concurrite, atque ab aestu persequentium, ad lacrimarum protinus refrigerium festinate. Ut dum mens vestra foris non invenit, ubi valeat secura quiescere, se intra se colligens ab omni studeas mundani strepitus perturbatione sopire' (Reindel, III, p. 40, ll. 6–12).

[80] *Epistola* 94: 'Unde cum visibiles lacrimas non potestis ex oculis carnis exprimere, sufficiat vobis, excessus proprios intra contriti cordis archana deflere' (Reindel, III, p. 40, ll. 24–26).

[81] *Epistola* 153: 'Itaque non ignoratis, fratres mei, quod gemens loquor, ad quantum sancti fervoris lapsus sit, immo proclivius cotidie labi non desinat noster ordo defectum, ut iam omnium pene mandatorum neglegenter obliti, sola professionis huius videamur veste contenti. Sub religionis enim specie seculariter vivimus' (Reindel, IV, p. 14, ll. 8–12).

under your head, and his right hand will embrace you',[82] only to shift immediately to a different register, that of control and purity: 'Indeed, the unclean animals of the vices will be tamed under the command of your dominion, the clean ones, however, will fatten the belly of your inner man with the feast of a most delightful meal.'[83]

Peter not only attacks the concern about money where there should be a focus on this inner treasure. He also directs his criticism at the unsettled nature of some of the monks. Not only will the vagrant monk come back with the corrupting images of the outside world, his wanderlust also inclines him to be a fancy dresser. Peter formulates a scathing condemnation:

> However, while he is after the decoration of the outer dress, the whole adornment of the inner man is scattered. This delusive madness, how I do not know, blinds the eye of the perverse mind, so that it sees neither what is respectable before men, nor attends to how before God one can clearly be seen […] For who when he sees a monk dressed in delicate clothes, does not immediately decide that this man is without the divine spirit, and more inclined to earthly than heavenly things? For what the mind is can be gathered from the clothes, and the quality of the intention is judged from the care for the outside.[84]

Besides, Peter, continues, expensive clothing is robbing the poor. The other extreme is to dress poorly and tastelessly in the hope of attracting public acclaim.[85] Inner and outer humility should go together, as in the example of David, in whom outer clothes and interior grace were combined.[86]

Instead of wandering through the world, with all the negative consequences thereof, the monk should seek remoteness. Only then is it possible for him to concentrate on his thought, again presented as a space, and in need of defense:

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[82] *Epistola* 165: 'In illo habebis anulum fidei, armillas perfecti in activa vita operis, dextralia etiam speculativae contemplationis. *Leva enim eius sub capite tuo, et dextera illius amplexabitur te*' ([Canticle 2. 6] Reindel, IV, p. 183, ll. 25–28).

[83] *Epistola* 165: 'Inmunda siquidem vitiorum armenta sub tuae ditionis imperio domabuntur, munda vero interioris tui hominis ventrem suavissimae refectionis dapibus saginabunt' (Reindel, IV, p. 184, ll. 4–6).

[84] *Epistola* 165: 'Verumtamen dum exterioris indumenti falera quaeritur, cuncta interioris hominis compositio dissipatur. Haec autem insania falsa, nescio quo pacto, ita perversae mentis oculos caecat, ut neque quae apud homines honestas sit, videat, neque unde apud Deum quis clarus videri possit, attendat. […] Quis enim monachum mollibus indutum videat, et non protinus illum divino vacuum spiritu, terrenis potius quam caelestibus iniare decernat? Quae enim sit mens ex veste colligitur, et iuxta exteriorem cultum, quae sit intentionis species, iudicatur' (Reindel, IV, p. 196, ll. 2–6 and ll. 14–17).

[85] *Epistola* 165 (Reindel, IV, p. 199, ll. 3–14).

[86] *Epistola* 165 (Reindel, IV, p. 200, ll. 16–27). On hypocrisy in general and on this passage in particular, see Frederic Amory, 'Whited Sepulchres: The Semantic History of Hypocrisy to the High Middle Ages', *Revue de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale*, 53 (1986), 5–39.

> Gather yourself together in the bedroom of your conscience, put barriers of censorial training against all the doors of your house, that is all the senses. For a spring which is checked on all sides, so as not to flow out everywhere, is raised by waves flowing high; on the contrary, one that through a great number of streams is divided, as soon as the burning heat hits it, dries up.[87]

The excuse that one is only obeying orders in going out into the world, is not valid: one sins, even if one seems to obey the orders of someone else—if, in fact, one fulfils these orders in accordance with one's own will. The inner may be hidden, but this hidden inner is exactly what God judges: 'Thus, who satisfies his own will in running around, and yet claims to obey the commands of his seniors, let him know that God does not so much believe his colourful verbosity, as judge, from what is hidden to men, in accordance with what is his own inner knowledge.'[88] Peter concludes: 'he who is dedicated to outer things, abandons himself, and even when he is recalled inside, in body but not in heart, has lost what is his.'[89] Throughout this passage, Peter uses the figures of Jacob, who stayed inside and received the paternal blessing, and Esau, who went out and forsook his rights. The monk should stay inside, just like Jacob, preparing a meal for his father, 'not from the surface of external sanctity, but from the virtues of his *conscientia*'.[90] God did not command to sacrifice the skin of the animals, but rather the inner parts (Leviticus 1. 6). Peter follows Gregory the Great when he writes that, according to a mystical understanding of God's commands to Moses, 'we cut the limbs in parts, when we subtly distinguish and consider the inner parts one by one, so that what on the outside looks sincere and solid, on the inside does not have cavities where the vice of vanity lurks'.[91]

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[87] *Epistola* 165: 'Intra conscientiae ergo tuae te cubiculum collige, cunctis domus tuae foribus, cunctis videlicet sensibus censoriae disciplinae repagula, ne quis ingrediatur, oppone. Fons enim, qui circumquaque ne effundatur occluditur, undis ad alta profluentibus elevatur, econtra qui per plures rivos hinc inde diducitur, mox ut super eum aestus ferventior incubuerit, exiccatur' (Reindel, IV, p. 203, ll. 1–6).

[88] *Epistola* 165: 'Qui ergo discurrendo per saeculum propriae libidini satisfacit, et tamen obedire se maiorem iussionibus asserit, noverit Deum non tam coloratis verbositatibus credere, quam de occultis hominum iuxta conscientiam iudicare' (Reindel, IV, p. 204, ll. 18–21).

[89] *Epistola* 165: 'Sic nimirum, sic qui exterioribus deditus semetipsum deseruit, et sua postmodum corpore, non corde in interiora revocatus amisit' (Reindel, IV, p. 204, l. 30 – p. 205, l. 1).

[90] *Epistola* 165: 'quando non de externae sanctitatis superficie, sed suave sibi de conscientiae suae virtutibus edulium parat' (Reindel, IV, p. 206, ll. 1–2).

[91] *Epistola* 165: 'cui mandato etiam mysticus intellectus inesse deprehenditur, si subtilius indagetur. Pellem namque hostiae subtrahimus, cum a mentis nostrae oculis superficiem virtutis amovemus. Cuius artus in frusta concidimus, cum distinguentes subtiliter eius intima membratimque cogitamus, ut quae foris sincera videntur et solida, intus non habeantur

As this last quotation indicates, separation and physical ascesis are a condition, but they are not sufficient. As Peter told his sisters, left to oneself and one's own thoughts, one has to identify these thoughts. In his letter to the hermit Stephanus, Peter included an elaborate discussion on the outer observances to be kept—that is, quiet, silence and fasting, and other practices which are part of the *spiritalis exercitii studia* such as genuflections and disciplinary strokes.[92] But after that Peter emphasized that for all the rules and examples he can give, in the end it is the hermit's cell itself which teaches the right way of living. He then turned to consider thinking, and urged the need to discriminate between thoughts: 'Now let us discuss briefly those things that go on in the mind, to instruct the one who is fighting in the spiritual battle against his own thought and the attacks of the devil, as it were with some insuperable weapons.'[93] Here again, it is important to resist from the beginning, and the metaphors of combat are used as they are used for the physical aspects of religious life:

> In the first place, my son, as you prepare to join battle with the invisible enemy, make an effort to fortify your mind on all sides by a watchful guard against any assault of thoughts which invade by stealth, and just as you throw any odds and ends, and rubbish that falls from the work of your hands in the fire straight away, thus project all the movements of your thinking onto God. And because he himself is a consuming fire, render all the superfluous things of your heart to him to consume.[94]

Either one opposes the thoughts when they try to come in, or one tries to eliminate them once they have entered. The first, of course, is easier, as Peter testifies from his own experience.[95]

Distinction is so important, not only to distinguish just between good and bad thoughts, but because there is always the danger of ambivalence. One may, for example, remember one's sins and be led either to penitence or to renewed enjoyment. Thus, one has to sort the thoughts:

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latebrosae vanitatis vicio cavernosa' (Reindel, IV, p. 206, ll. 6–11). See the reference to Gregory the Great, *Moralia* I, 36, 57 in footnote 59 in Reindel's edition.

[92] *Epistola* 50 (Reindel, II, p. 94, l. 11).

[93] *Epistola* 50: 'Nunc autem ex his, quae versantur in mente, pro stili compendio breviter disputemus, ut in spiritali certamine dimicantem adversus cogitationes proprias et pugnas diaboli quasi quibusdam telis insuperabilibus instruamus' (Reindel, II, p. 111, l. 19 – p. 112, l. 1).

[94] *Epistola* 50: 'In primis igitur, fili, quicunque manus ad confligendum paras cum invisibili hoste conserere, satage mentem tuam ab omni suggestionum obrepentium impetu pervigili custodia communire, et sicut quisquilias et quaeque purgamenta de operibus manuum tuarum decidunt, in ignem protinus abicis, ita nichilominus omnes cogitationum tuarum motus in Deum proice. Et quoniam ipse ignis consumens est, illi superflua cordis tui ad consumendum trade' (Reindel, II, p. 112, ll. 1–7).

[95] *Epistola* 50: 'Crede frequenter experto' (Reindel, II, p. 112, l. 23).

> Among the waves attacking with overflowing thoughts, set your mind as if it were a net, that retains right deliberations as fishes, but that lets vain thoughts flow out and slip through as all sorts of detestable crawling creatures. Distinguish amongst your thoughts, and pay close attention not only to what thoughts come to the mind, but also where they come from. Consider what I say: for often the malicious enemy recalls former sins to the mind, that you take delight in the same attractions again. Often the divine spirit does the same, that you repent in tears, and while one and the same thing leads to different outcomes, the careless mind does not know what is happening to it.[96]

One has to continuously guard one's thoughts. Even during psalm singing the demons try to distract one, to annul its effect.[97] One of the most effective counter-measures, against all the vices, is prayer in general, and invoking the thought of the grave.[98] And then, in what is the epitome of arming oneself against the attacks of the devil, Peter also distinguishes the inner from the outer and shows how the mind and the body come together in the symbolic gesture of the sign of the cross: 'Inasmuch as the sign of the cross is impressed on the body itself, the inner man is immediately summoned forth to fight, with all his strength, against erroneous thought.'[99] In a similar combination of the hermit's material condition and its symbolic meaning, Peter's portrait of the hermit's cell encapsulates traditions of eremitism and a new emphasis on inwardness.

The Hermit's Cell

As Peter told Stephanus, beyond all the rules and examples the ultimate teacher is the hermit's cell itself. He does not want to enumerate all the precepts of the

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[96] *Epistola* 50: 'Inter fluctuantes plane cogitationum inundantium impetus mentem tuam quasi rete constitue, quae videlicet recta consilia velut pisces teneat, et vanas cogitationes effluere atqe elabi velut repentia quaeque abhominanda permittat. Discerne cogitationes, et non solum quae ad mentem veniant, sed etiam unde veniant, vigilanter attende. Animadverte quod loquor: sepe namque malignus hostis praeterita peccata ad mentem revocat, ut eisdem rursus illecebris delecteris. Sepe divinus spiritus idipsum facit, ut in fletibus compungaris, et cum una eademque res ad diversos exitus tendat, plerumque mens improvida, quid circa se agatur, ignorat' (Reindel, II, p. 115, ll. 5–14).

[97] *Epistola* 50: 'Porro dum psallimus, Deo nostro sacrificium laudis offerimus. Sed huic sacrificio pestilentes spiritus velut arpigae circumvolant, et pravas ingerendo cogitaciones tamquam iniectis illud quibusdam stercoribus foedant, aut certe omnino diripiunt, si temptationibus infestando nos ab oratione compescunt' (Reindel, II, p. 115, ll. 21–25).

[98] *Epistola* 50: 'In omni autem titillantis pugnae certamine sepulchrum stude semper ad memoriam revocare' (Reindel, II, p. 116, ll. 13–14).

[99] *Epistola* 50: 'Quatinus dum in ipsam carnem signum sanctae crucis imprimitur, continuo interior homo ad dimicandum cum cogitatione perversa totis viribus excitetur' (Reindel, II, p. 118, ll. 5–7).

eremitical life, and says it is not necessary to bring all the relevant material from the *Rule of Benedict*, the *Life of the Fathers* or (Cassian's) *Institutions* and *Conferences* together:

> Furthermore, the cell itself and the prolonged residence there teaches the one who persists, and reveals in the course of time effectively what the tongue of the body cannot explain with noisy words. Therefore we touch upon a few things out of many, and run through them shortly, but leave the greatest experience of this holy teaching chiefly to the cell itself. Let thus the brother only persist in his cell, and it will fully teach its inhabitant the whole order of living.[100]

It is after this praise of the cell that Peter teaches how to manage one's thinking. It is precisely in this inner life of thought that one is really left to oneself. Alone in one's cell, after committing a sin of thought or action, even when his anxious conscience eats him, the hermit should not go out immediately for the sake of confession, or break the rule of silence, but pray to the Lord Jesus Christ, and give him 'as it were the engagement ring of future confession'[101]. Peter combines this intimacy of engagement-imagery with the rather stern, sacramental and priestly view, where the sinner proclaims his unworthyness, when he inserts an exemplary prayer:

> Lord Jesus Christ, eternal pontiff and servant of the saints and priest of the true tabernacle according to the order of Melchizedek, who has offered the holy and immaculate lamb of your own body as a health-giving sacrifice to God the Father in the odour of sweetness for our sins, and thus have entered the Holy of Holies once a year not without blood, that is in heaven itself where you appear to the face of the Father, I confess to you, that I have fallen in this sin, that I know is not hidden from the eyes of your majesty. Therefore, because of this and my innumerable other very grave sins I am not worthy to lift my unhappy eyes to heaven, or to enter your holy church, or to even express your blessed and glorious name with my polluted lips. That is why I beseech your immeasurable clemency in tears, you who have deemed it

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[100] *Epistola* 50: 'Enimvero nos omnia huius institutionis praecepta minutius non describimus, sed multa quae et passim nobis occurrunt, ex studio praeterimus. Quicquid enim in beati Benedicti regula, quicquid in vita patrum, quicquid in institutis sive collationibus dictum, huic competere disciplinae perpendimus, in unum hic cuncta colligere superfluum iudicamus. Huc accedit, quod ipsa cellula et diuturna conversatio perseverantem efficaciter instruit, et per processum temporis rebus aperit, quod verbis perstrepentibus explicare carnis lingua non possit. Unde nos ex pluribus pauca eademque breviter perstringendo transcurrimus, maioremque huius sanctae disciplinae peritiam ipsi potissimum cellulae reservamus. Perseveret enim tantummodo frater in cella, illa habitatorem suum omnem vivendi ordinem plenius edocebit' (Reindel, II, p. 111, ll. 7–18).

[101] *Epistola* 50: 'et futurae iam confessionis velut quasdam illi arras in hunc modem trade' (Reindel, II, p. 118, ll. 14–15).

worthy to die for sinners and for people like me, that you mercifully grant this to me, and enable me to arrive at a true and fruitful penitence.[102]

In *Letter* 165, almost as an afterthought, Peter explains the reverse side of the penitential solitude which he urges upon the reader: the condition for reaching God's inaccessible light:

Whoever thus wishes to attain with his mental vision that inaccessible light, must necessarily purge his inner eyes from every stain of worldly action through long stretches of immunity, lest when he lifts his eyes to explore the highest things, the dust of earthly action is in the way, and he sees more the darkness which he has left behind, than that he takes hold of the light towards which he strives.[103]

Whereas Anselm of Canterbury, in the prayer which constitutes the *Proslogion*, clears a way to the *lux inaccessibilis* by performing and describing a process of thinking (concluding that 'you are not only that than which nothing greater can be thought; you are something greater than it is possible to think about'[104]) for Peter, it is the hermit's ascetic and penitential performance which opens up access to the Divine. And it is the continuous isolation from the outer world in the cell, which facilitates an inner life: 'Whereas custom makes the cell sweet, and like a bedroom, wandering around makes it look horrible, and a prison.'[105] Solitude enables one to achieve the necessary concentration. Just as a hunter tries to close off all exits but

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[102] *Epistola* 50: 'Domine Iesu Christe, aeterne pontifex et sanctorum minister ac veri tabernaculi sacerdos iuxta ordinem Melchisedech, qui sanctum et immaculatum proprii corporis tui agnum, hostiam salutarem optulisti Deo Patri in hodorem suavitatis pro peccatis nostris, et sic non sine sanguine semel in anno in sancta sanctorum intrasti, hoc est in ipsum caelum, ut appareas vultui Patris, tibi confiteor, quia cecidi in hoc peccatum, quod oculos tuae maiestatis latere non potuit. Unde et propter istud et propter alia innumerabilia et gravissima mea peccata non sum dignus infelices oculos meos levare ad caelum, vel in sanctam aecclesiam tuam ingredi, aut etiam benedictum et gloriosum nomen tuum pollutis labiis meis exprimere. Quapropter lacrimabiliter obsecro immensam clementiam tuam, qui pro peccatoribus michique similibus mori dignatus es, ut hoc michi clementer indulgeas, et ad veram fructuosamque paenitentiam pervenire concedas' (Reindel, II, p. 118, l. 15 – p. 119, l. 2).

[103] *Epistola* 165: 'Quisquis enim desiderat ad illud inaccessibile lumen acie mentis attingere, necessarium sibi est interiores oculos per diuturna vacationis spacia ab omni mundanae actionis labe purgare, ne dum ad summa speculanda oculos elevat, terrenae conversationis pulvis obsistat et magis tenebras, quas reliquerat, videat, quam lumen, ad quod nititur, apprehendat' (Reindel, II, p. 210, l. 20 – p. 211, l. 2).

[104] See M. B. Pranger, *The Artificiality of Christianity. Essays on the Poetics of Monasticism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 120, 152.

[105] *Epistola* 165: 'Consuetudo enim facit monacho cellulam dulcem, vagatio videri facit horribilem. Vagantibus cellula carcer est, permanentibus suave cubiculum' (Reindel, II, p. 211, ll. 6–8).

one, Peter's readers must close off the way of vices, and struggle with their thoughts only.[106]

As early as in his letter to Leo of Sitria (*Letter* 28) Peter had praised the hermit's cell. The second part of this letter has often been transmitted separately as a *laus heremiticae vitae*.[107] Many of Peter's views on the solitary life can be found in this letter, following on from a long discussion about a question of liturgy. Images of intimacy and fragility combine with more severe metaphors of military service, or with medical or architectural comparisons. Right at the beginning, moreover, he offers an intimation of divine presence. 'The solitary life is the school of heavenly teaching and the learning of divine arts. God is there, where one becomes acquainted with him, there is the life for which one strives, and here one arrives at the knowledge of the highest truth.'[108] The hermitage is a paradise of delights, where spices and flowers grow: the roses of love, the lilies of chastity, the violets of humility, the myrrh of mortification, the incense of prayer.[109] But the hermitage is also the furnace where Daniel's three companions repress the force of fire with their prayer, and 'the oven where the vases of the supreme king are formed'.[110] The cell, in which the human soul restores in itself the image of its Creator, is addressed as a partner:

> You make man return to his beginning and recall him from the dejection of his exile to the height of his former dignity. You make it so that a man, set in the castle of the mind, sees all earthly things below flow by, and sees himself pass through in that stream of things falling.[111]

The cell is a tabernacle of holy military service, the field of divine combat, the arena of spiritual battle,[112] but also 'the meeting-place of God and men' and, finally, 'the

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[106] *Epistola* 165: 'Venator quoque oppilatis anfractibus, densis circumsepit saltuum lustra fruticibus, unumque pro multis aditum feris fugacibus ex arte relinquit illicque se vibrata stringendo venabula in insidiis ponit […] Et nos cum viciis ad pravi operis libertatem prodire nitentibus, terrenae actionis meatus occludimus, quasi uno in loco illis insidias ponimus, quia cum solis cogitationibus iugiter dimicamus' (Reindel, II, p. 212, ll. 1–9).

[107] See *Epistola* 28 (Reindel, I, 272, note 56).

[108] *Epistola* 28: 'Solitaria sane vita caelestis doctrinae schola est ac divinarum artium disciplina. Illic Deus est ubi discitur, vita quo tenditur, atque ad summae veritatis ibi noticiam pervenitur' (Reindel, I, p. 272, ll. 10–12).

[109] *Epistola* 28 (Reindel, I, p. 272, ll. 12–18).

[110] *Epistola* 28 (Reindel, I, p. 273, ll. 1–10).

[111] *Epistola* 28: 'Tu hominem ad suum facis redire principium et de exilii deiectione ad antiquae dignitatis revocas celsitudinem. Tu facis, ut homo in mentis arce constitutus cuncta sub se videat terrena defluere, semetipsum quoque in ipsa rerum labentium prospiciat decursione transire' (Reindel, I, p. 273, ll. 24–27).

[112] *Epistola* 28 (Reindel, I, p. 273, l. 28 – p. 274, l. 8).

accomplice of the secret counsel that God has with men'.[113] Comparable to the *figura* that Peter evokes in other letters, the hermit, going through the nightly psalms and keeping military guard for the divine camp, presents himself as 'a beautiful appearance of things' (*pulchra rerum species*), just as the stars can be seen in their course in heaven, and there is a correspondence between the heavenly elements and the servant of God.[114] Even when tears do not flow physically, the cell knows that 'the bitterness of heart is not without the fruits of tears, for what is not gathered from the outer branches, is forever kept in the root itself of the vigorous heart'.[115] The cell is addressed as nearly emulating the Lord's sepulchre, where those who are dead by sin are brought to life again. Its inhabitant elevates himself to a higher level through contemplation.[116] The cell is also 'the mirror of souls, where the human mind observes itself acutely, and fills up what is deficient, represses what is superfluous, puts right what is askew, sets in order what is deformed', and it is 'the bridal bed, in which the wedding-ring of the Holy Spirit is bestowed, and the happy soul is allied to the heavenly bridegroom'.[117]

This celebration of the hermit's life, while praising the solitary life, does not leave an ultimate impression of the hermit as an isolated individual, but rather of the communities of hermits which Peter addresses throughout in his work. The potential isolation of his readers is redeemed in the first half of the letter. Here Peter shows how life in the hermitage is embedded in the Church.[118] Just as in the letter to Stephanus the lonely hermit should confess to Christ, or pray to Mary and the saints, and thus remain part of the invisible *universitas fidelium*, in this letter the hermit's life had been firmly anchored in the 'one body of Christ'. This was the outcome of Peter's discussion on the question of whether a solitary hermit, when celebrating the Mass, should say the usual plural form *dominus vobiscum* (the Lord be with you)

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[113] *Epistola* 28: 'Cella nempe est conciliabulum Dei et hominum, compitum in carne degentium et spirituum supernorum. […] Cella denique conscia est secreti consilii, quod habet cum hominibus Deus' (Reindel, I, p. 274, ll. 23–27).

[114] *Epistola* 28 (Reindel, I, p. 274, l. 28 – p. 275, l. 7).

[115] *Epistola* 28: '[Cella] novit, cum mens hominis caelestis gratiae rore perfunditur, et per compunctionis fletum lacrimarum inundantium imbribus irrigatur, ubi et si ex carneis oculis lacrimae non erumpant, ipsa tamen amaritudo cordis a lacrimarum fructibus non elongat, quia quod ex ramo exterioris accidentiae non colligitur, in ipsa humidi cordis virentis semper radice servatur' (Reindel, I, p. 275, ll. 9–14).

[116] *Epistola* 28 (Reindel, I, p. 275, ll. 17–20).

[117] *Epistola* 28: 'Tu namque es speculum animarum, ubi se mens humana perspicaciter intuens, quod minus est impleat, quod superfluum reprimat, quod obliquum est dirigat, quod deforme componat. Tu nuptialis es thalamus, in quo sancti Spiritus arra tribuitur et caelesti sponso felix anima foederatur' (Reindel, I, p. 276, ll. 20–22).

[118] See M. B. Pranger, 'Petrus Damiani de kluizenaar: het leven als kunstwerk', *Tijdschrift voor Theologie*, 17 (1977), 250–262. See also Pranger, 'Anselm Misunderstood'.

though he is on his own. Peter had argued that the rules of grammar, which were eagerly followed in the schools, had no validity over the rules of the Church, and he maintained that, in any one person, the whole Church is present. Peter's attitude towards the schools, with their use of grammar and the new dialectics, is part of his broader outlook on the world.[119] What is relevant here, is that his ecclesiastical-liturgical alternative to the approach of the schools is the background for the hermit's life.

Liturgy is not the only limit to the hermit's solitary existence. The hermits do penance not only for themselves but for their brothers as well. The epitome of Peter's commendation of the brethren in Fonte Avellana was his praise of their mutual charity: 'This seems to exceed all else […] that there is so much charity among the brethren, so much unity of will inflamed by the fire of vicarious love, that each believes himself to be born not just for himself, but for all.'[120] This mutual love is suffused with the same emphasis on penitential practices as the rest of the life in Fonte Avellana. When a brother dies, the others will do penance for him. If someone dies before having completed the penance imposed upon him, the brethren will share it between them. This charity is extended to the world.[121] Although Peter repeatedly pointed to the dangers of involving oneself with the salvation of others,[122] he showed early on, in his *Vita Romualdi*, how Romuald's temptation to retire from his community and be content only with his own salvation was overcome by his concern about the salvation of others.[123]

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[119] See Peter's discussions in *Epistola* 117 (De sancta simplicitate; Reindel, III, pp. 316–329) and *Epistola* 119 (De divina omnipotentia; Reindel, III, pp. 341–384). On Peter's attitude towards secular learning see the literature in note 14 above.

[120] *Epistola* 18: 'Illud sane cuncta haec videtur excedere, illud omnibus sancte viventium digne censetur virtutibus eminere, quod tanta est inter fratres karitas, tanta unitas voluntatum vicarii amoris igne conflata, ut unusquisque se non sibi sed omnibus natum credat' (Reindel, I, p. 175, ll. 5–8).

[121] See Lohmer, *Heremi conversatio*, p. 127, on Peter's sermon 38, *In solemnitate sanctorum martyrum Donati et Hilariani*, Chapter 8: 'ut non solum de nostra salute solliciti, sed ad lucrandas etiam proximorum nostrorum animas simus sollerter intenti' (Lucchesi, p. 237, ll. 182–183).

[122] See for example *Epistola* 165 (Reindel, IV, p. 214, ll. 16–22).

[123] *Vita beati Romualdi*, Chapter 18: 'Cum itaque sic eliminatus abiret et nimia tristitię vis in mentis eius iam interiora descenderet, hoc apud semetipsum deliberat, ut iam de cętero sua contentus alienę salutis curam omnino postponat. Post quam videlicet cogitationem tantus animum eius terror invasit, ut si in eo quod mente concęperat obstinate persisteret, periturum se dampnandumque divino iudicio nullatenus dubitaret' (Tabacco, p. 43, l. 8 – p. 44, l. 4). On this aspect of Peter's ideals see C. Phipps, 'Romuald-Model Hermit: Eremitical Theory in Saint Peter Damian's *Vita Beati Romualdi*, Chapters 16–21' in *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition*, ed. by W. J. Sheils, Studies in Church History, 22 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), pp. 65–

In yet another sense the hermit is not on his own. Peter had started his letter to Stephanus on the eremitical life by mentioning its forerunners, the Old Testament Elijah and Elisha, the New Testament Paul and Anthony. He also included the contemporary examples that he used in other letters. If, in the end, the hermit is an example himself, he becomes a link in a long chain:

> Present yourself in everything as an example of accomplished virtue, and, as it is said, offer yourself everywhere smooth and rounded, that, beaten now by the hammer of discipline, and polished by the file of penitence and holy combat, you may afterwards be put in the order of the fiery stones, without tingling or rustle.[124]

This may apply to non-hermits as well, as when Peter tells his sisters that God 'surrounds you with harder scourges, and educates you with lashes, that he now files and polishes his pearls, which later he will put without the tingle of the axe or a hammer or the sound of whatever tools in the edifice of the heavenly temple'.[125] Not only is the reader thus made part of a larger whole, but in the end the original dichotomy between outer and inner is resolved, as they coincide in this 'smooth and rounded' reader.

Conclusion

Peter expressly developed his views in the context of tradition: the tradition of Benedictine monasticism, and the revived tradition of the desert. The hermit in his cell as much as Peter's widowed sisters are part of this tradition and even if physically far from the world, they are very much part of the Church. As the few references in this chapter to other eleventh-century authors (Otloh of Saint-Emmeram, John of Fécamp, Anselm of Canterbury) suggest, Peter Damian's perception of man and his inner life was one among others. What Peter emphasizes is the personal aspect of following examples. Within this personal effort the *homo interior* is reclaimed from the outside world and has to be defended by a wall of

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77. On the combination of both renunciation and service of others as the ideal in contemporary saints' lives more generally see I. van ´t Spijker, *Als door een speciaal stempel.*

[124] *Epistola* 50: 'In omnibus te exhibe consummatae virtutis exemplum, et, ut dicitur, undique te praebe teretem atque rotundum, ut malleo nunc disciplinae contusus, et lima penitentiae sanctique certaminis expolitus, postmodum sine tinnitu vel strepitu ponaris in ordine lapidum ignitorum' (Reindel, II, p. 124, ll. 14–18). On *teres atque rotundus* (compare Horace, *Satire* II, 7, 86) see Jean Leclercq, 'Recherches sur les sermons sur les Cantiques de S. Bernard', *Revue Bénédictine*, 59 (1959), 237–257 (p. 252); *Revue Bénédictine*, 60 (1960), 562–590 (p. 590).

[125] *Epistola* 94: 'Flagellis vos durioribus cingit, verberibus erudit, ut margarita sua nunc limet et poliat, quae postmodum sine tinnitu securis et mallei vel cuiuslibet ferramenti sonitu in templi caelestis aedificio ponat' (Reindel, III, p. 40, ll. 3–5).

virtues. Just as life in the community of Fonte Avellana, the inner man is like the one leaf left on the tree, protected by divine power.[126] The inner life needs the protection of a *cingulum virtutum*. Physical seclusion and ascesis are the best condition for the combat against vain thoughts and ambivalence. In the end the result is the hermit portrayed as an example or even an icon. If this recalls the violence of the struggle, or suggests rigidity, it does not annul the frailty of the hermit's existence, nor the intimate evocation of the soul's fragile embraces in the *cubiculum* of the cell, or, as in Peter's letter to his sisters, the *thalamus* of the mind.

At the same time, the God whom Peter's readers confront, is still the awe-inspiring 'Ruler of the Universe'. In his presence only 'fear and trembling' are appropriate. Self-abasement in front of this God is the only possible attitude. This is still Anselm's God, and Anselm's *Meditations* are meant to inspire a sense of the utter dependence of human beings on the divine order in a cosmos from which one cannot escape. As Anselm wrote in *Cur Deus Homo*:

> If those things which are encircled by the heavens wished not to continue to exist beneath the heavens, or wished to get away from the heavens, they would nonetheless be able to exist only beneath the heavens and be able to come away from the heavens only by coming toward them. For no matter from what place or to what place or by what route they would go, they would still be circumscribed by the heavens.[127]

In this divinely ordered universe, just 'a single look, which is contrary to God's will',[128] would leave man without any possibility of reconciliation on his own account. As Anselm's interlocutor in the dialogue says: 'Unless faith consoled me, this reason alone would make me despair'.[129]

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[126] *Epistola* 18 (Reindel, I, p. 169, see note 25).

[127] Anselmus, *Cur Deus Homo* 1, 15: 'Cum vero non vult quod debet, deum, quantum ad illam pertinet, inhonorat, quoniam non se sponte subdit illius dispositioni, et universitatis ordinem et pulchritudinem, quantum in se est, perturbat, licet potestatem aut dignitatem dei nullatenus laedat aut decoloret. Si enim ea quae caeli ambitu continentur, vellent non esse sub caelo, aut elongari a caelo, nullatenus possent nisi sub caelo esse nec fugere caelum nisi appropinquando caelo. Nam et unde et quo et qua irent, sub caelo essent; et quanto magis a qualibet caeli parte elongarentur, tanto magis oppositae parti propinquarent', quoted from *S. Anselmi Cantuarensi Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, ed. by Franciscus Salesius Schmitt, 6 vols (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1968, facsimile reprint of the first edn., Seckau, Rome, Edinburgh 1938–1961), II, 73, ll. 6–14. The translation is by Jasper Hopkins, Herbert Richardson, *Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury,* 4 vols (Toronto: Edwin Mellen; London: S.C.M. Press, 1974–76), III (1976), 73.

[128] Anselmus, *Cur Deus Homo* I, 21: 'Si videres te in conspectu dei, et aliquis tibi diceret: aspice illuc; et deus econtra: nullatenus volo, ut aspicias: quaere tu ipse in corde tuo quid sit in omnibus quae sunt, pro quo contra voluntatem dei deberes illum aspectum facere' (Schmitt, p. 88, ll. 20–23).

[129] Anselmus, *Cur Deus homo* I, 22: 'Nisi fides me consolaretur, hoc solum me cogeret desperare' (Schmitt, p. 90, l. 6).

For all Anselm's endeavours to establish a rationally founded truth as the basis for faith, faith never failed him. Maybe his rational confidence explains why his interiority is more dynamic than Peter's. Anselm is able to perform, in the *Proslogion* for example, the inner drama—'Come now, little man […] Enter the inner chamber of your mind'—which begins with the monastic complaint about human sinfulness and divine absence and which unfolds as the argument by reason alone, the *unum argumentum*, by which he compels the divine to present itself.[130] Despite Anselm's pessimism, the 'Anselmian transformation' of devotional tradition manifests a sense of the inner life as something more self-contained than that which we saw in Peter Damian. Peter, regardless of his schooling in dialectical and rhetorical skills, had experienced what he considered to be the dangers of a rational approach to Christian doctrine and way of life, and he reacted to this disruption of 'cultic integrity'[131] by adopting an attitude of spiritual militancy, by emphasizing human frailty, and by formulating a rigid view of the *homo interior*. Peter Damian is as far from Southern's 'Medieval Humanism', with its confidence in human capacities as Anselm. But unlike Anselm's view, which, according to his *Vita*, allowed for leniency in monastic pedagogy, Peter's view of the inner man implies a very severe process of formation.

Although humility and awareness of human inadequacy remained essential elements in twelfth-century orchestrations of the inner life, in the following chapters we will see that these elements can be embedded in a more optimistic anthropology. In the next chapter I turn to Hugh of Saint-Victor, for whom the *homo interior* was a natural part of self-interpretation and the contrast between inner and outer was less urgent. Ambivalence and the unrest of the human heart no longer indicate a reprobate soul, but are accepted as inevitable and will become the starting point for a more complex view of man's place in the world.

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[130] For this reading of the Proslogion see Pranger, *The Artificiality of Christianity*.

[131] M. B. Pranger, 'God', in *De middeleeuwse ideeënwereld. 1000–1300*, ed. by Manuel Stoffers, Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen, 58 (Heerlen: Open Universiteit; Hilversum: Verloren, 1994), pp. 93–116 (p. 103).

Hugh of Saint-Victor:
Theology and Interiority

The reform of monasticism, of which Peter Damian was a part, continued well into the twelfth century and resulted in an unprecedented diversity in the forms of religious life. Eremitism was the origin of many new monasteries, but it also influenced traditional Benedictine monasticism. Cistercians, Premonstratensians and other regular canons, and Benedictines discussed and promoted their own ways of living. These discussions contributed to the articulation of religious ideals, of the different ideas of what religious life was about. An important feature of twelfth-century monasticism was the recruitment of new monks or canons. Until the end of the eleventh century, the inhabitants of a monastery were, predominantly, monks who, from their childhood, had been raised in the monastery. We have already seen that Peter Damian came to religious life following a worldly career. More and more, from the end of the eleventh century, people came to the monastic life at a later age. The example of Bernard of Clairvaux, entering Cîteaux with his companions at the age of twenty, is an illustration of an increasingly common phenomenon. This change has to be kept in mind as part of the background of the changes in monastic pedagogy. In this pedagogy the notion of an inner life, of the *homo interior*, was now taken for granted.

When it comes to twelfth-century ideas of forming the inner man, Hugh of Saint-Victor comes immediately to mind. Saint-Victor was a community of regular canons, founded by William of Champeaux in 1108. Part of the general movement of reform, regular canons aimed to achieve a return to the practices of the primitive church, when the clergy, successors of the apostles, followed a monastic life-style. In the following two chapters the word 'monastic' is often meant to refer to this aspect of the canon's life. Saint-Victor became one of the outstanding centres of scholarship in and around Paris, before the university took over. Hugh came to this community after 1115, most probably from Saxony, to learn and then to teach. He

contributed to the distinguishing character of Saint-Victor, in which the pursuit of knowledge was combined with and made part of the ideal of the religious life and the concern for personal salvation. The basis for this way of life, which was meant to overcome the opposition between school and cloister, was the Rule of Augustine.[1]

Very soon after his death Hugh was known as the 'great theologian of our time', and as a 'second Augustine'. Bonaventura praised him as combining the three 'mystical' levels of scriptural exegesis represented by Augustine, Gregory the Great and Dionysius.[2] Hugh left a large *oeuvre*, in which the dual pursuit of knowledge and devotion is reflected. He wrote literature of instruction of various kinds: a practical guide for novices, the *Institutio novitiorum*; an encyclopaedic theory of learning in his *Didascalicon*; several works on his theory of exegesis, and on grammar; and an exposition of meditation and prayer, in *De meditatione* and *De virtute orandi*. He applied his theories in works such as his *Commentaria in*

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[1] On this combination see Ralf M. W. Stammberger, '"Via ad ipsum sunt scientia, disciplina, bonitas". Theorie und Praxis der Bildung in der Abtei Sankt Viktor im zwölften Jahrhundert', in *"Scientia" und "Disciplina". Wissenstheorie und Wissenschaftspraxis im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Rainer Berndt and others (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002), pp. 91–126. On the Rule of Augustine in Saint-Victor see Rainer Berndt, '*Scriptura sacra magistra fidei*. Zur Augustinus-Rezeption und der Einführung der *vita regularis* in Sankt Viktor zu Paris', in *Regula Sancti Augustini. Normative Grundlage differenter Verbände im Mitelalter*, ed. by Gert Melville and Anne Müller, Publikationen der Akademie der Augustiner-Chorherren von Windesheim, 3 (Paring: Augustiner Chorherren Verlag, 2002), pp. 105–126. On the place of Saint-Victor in the Parisian context see Joachim Ehlers, 'Das Augustinerchorherrenstift St. Viktor in der Pariser Schul- und Studienlandschaft des 12. Jahrhunderts', in *Aufbruch-Wandel-Erneuerung. Beiträge zur "Renaissance" des 12. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Georg Wieland, 9. Blaubeurer Symposium vom 9. bis 11. Oktober 1992 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1995), pp. 100–122. For an introduction to Hugh of Saint-Victor and to the scholarship about him and his works see Dominique Poirel, *Hugues de Saint-Victor* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1998).

[2] Richard of Saint-Victor, in *De spiritu blasphemiae*: 'Nonne satius est in magni illius, magistrum Hugonem loquor, nostri temporis theologi sententiam pergere' quoted from *Richard de Saint-Victor. Opuscules théologiques. Texte critique avec introduction, notes et tables*, ed. by J. Ribaillier, Textes philosophiques du Moyen Age, XV (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1967), pp. 123–129 (p. 125); compare Richard of Saint-Victor, *De contemplatione (Benjamin Maior)* I, 4 (where Richard defines contemplation): 'vel certe sicut praecipuo illi nostri temporis theologo placuit' in *Contemplatio. Philosophische Studien zum Traktat Benjamin Maior des Richard von St. Victor. Mit einer verbesserten Edition des Textes*, ed. by Marc-Aeilko Aris (Frankfurt am Main: Josef Knecht, 1996), p. 9, ll. 26–27; PL 196, col. 67D. For s*ecundus Augustinus, alter Augustinus* see PL 175, cols CLXVID; CLXVIIIA; and J. De Ghellinck, *Le Mouvement théologique du XIIe siècle* (Bruges: Éditions 'De Tempel'; Bruxelles: l'Édition Universelle; Paris: Desclée-De Brouwer, 1948), p. 185, note 2, who quotes Thomas of Cantimpré and Jacques de Vitry. Bonaventura's praise of Hugh can be found in *De reductione artium ad theologiam*, Sancti Bonaventurae opera omnia, ed. studio et cura PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 10 vols (Quaracchi 1882–1902) V, 319–325 (p. 321).

Hierarchiam coelestem, and in *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, one of the first *summae* of theology, and also in his great exegetical meditations such as *De vanitate*, *De archa morali*, and the *Homiliae in Salomonis Ecclesiasten*. Although these works have been distinguished by historians and theologians alike as exegetical, devotional, or theological works, there is a common intention in them, based on a common point of departure in reading scripture.[3] For all their different intentions, Hugh never loses sight of the aspect of *paideia*, of forming the person, which to a large extent consists in learning how to read. Hugh's *oeuvre* finds its starting-point in his pedagogical and didactic practice, as becomes clear, for example, in the prologue of *De archa*, in which he sets out to answer the questions of his pupils as to the causes of the instability of the human heart.[4]

In this chapter I shall first discuss some of Hugh's earlier didactic works, in which he develops his ideas about different routes to knowledge. In the second part, I concentrate on the *Commentaria in Hierarchiam coelestem* and *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, as they reveal man's place in the world. In the third part, I will show how these aspects form a synthesis in his guides for the inner life: Hugh's view of the *homo interior* is firmly embedded in his overall worldview.

The School of Virtue

The Instruction of Novices

I shall begin by looking at *De institutione novitiorum*, as the most obvious starting point to uncover Hugh's ideas about forming the person. This is a work for novices,

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[3] See Rainer Berndt, 'Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Exegese und Theologie in "De sacramentis christianae fidei" Hugos von St. Viktor', in *Neue Richtungen in der hoch- und spätmittelalterlichen Bibelexegese*, ed. by Robert E. Lerner and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996), pp. 65–78. For recent discussions of the authenticity of Hugh's works see Ralf M. W. Stammberger, 'Die Edition der Werke des Hugo von Sankt Viktor († 1141) durch Abt Gilduin von Sankt Viktor († 1155) – Eine Rekonstruktion', in *Corpus Victorinum Instrumenta*, I, ed. by Rainer Berndt (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003); Dominique Poirel, *Livre de la nature et débat trinitaire au XIIe siècle: Le 'De Tribus Diebus' de Hugues de Saint-Victor*, Bibliotheca Victorina, XIV (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002).

[4] *De archa Noe pro arche sapientie cvm archa ecclesie at archa matris gratie*, I, 1: 'Cum sederem aliquando in conuentu fratrum et, illis interrogantibus meque respondente, multa in medium prolata fuissent, ad hoc tandem deducta sunt uerba, ut de humani potissimum cordis instabilitate et inquietudine ammirari omnes simul et suspirare inciperemus', quoted from *De archa Noe pro. Libellus de formatione arche*, ed. by Patricius Sicard, CCCM 176 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), p. 3, ll. 1–5.

beginners in the religious life.[5] It includes what could be seen as a book on etiquette, and has been a major source for Jean-Claude Schmitt's study of gestures.[6] C. Stephen Jaeger has discussed this work as the late fruit of a long tradition of charismatic *paideia*.[7] It offers a concise introduction to Hugh's ideas about the religious life, but it is also emblematic of Hugh's total *oeuvre*, much of which is explicitly didactic. If *De institutione* owes more to the secular traditions of antiquity and the cathedral schools of the eleventh century than to monastic and canonical traditions,[8] one should bear in mind that, from the start, the latter were greatly indebted to the former.

Many of the themes discussed here will return in the broader context of Hugh's other works. This is certainly true of the conversion mentioned in the very first sentence. The novices will learn in time about the cosmological significance of *conversio*.[9] Here conversion, to the religious life, is only the beginning, as it was for the hermits who read Peter Damian's letters: 'Because, brothers, thanks to the Lord, you have turned yourself away (*conversi estis*) from the vain conduct of this world and as you are disposed to return to him who has made you with all the intent and vows of your mind, you should now learn the very way, by which you can arrive at him whom you are seeking.'[10] However, it may seem a long way from the 'desert-ideals' of Peter Damian to the settlement of Saint-Victor just outside Paris, and from the severity of the reformer to the moderation of Hugh, who does not lack a sense of

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[5] *De institutione novitiorum*, in *L'Oeuvre de Hugues de Saint-Victor*, Vol. I, *De institutione novitiorum. De virtute orandi. De laude caritatis. De arrha animae*, ed. by H. B. Feiss and P. Sicard; trans. (French) by D. Poirel, H. Rochais, P. Sicard; introduction, notes and appendices by D. Poirel (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), pp. 18–114. For the date see the introduction to *De institutione novitiorum*, p. 10. In the following I quote from this edition (page and lines) and will add the place in PL 176. Jean-Claude Schmitt, *La Raison des gestes dans l'occident médiéval* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990) p. 386, note 50, lists several comparable works of instruction. See also Carolyne Walker Bynum, 'Docere Verbo et Exemplo: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality', *Harvard Theological Studies*, 31 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979) and Carolyne Walker Bynum, 'The Spirituality of Regular Canons in the Twelfth Century', in Carolyne Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 22–58. For a comprehensive view of education in Saint-Victor and the place of *De institutione* in it see Stammberger, '"Via ad ipsum sunt scientia, disciplina, bonitas"'.

[6] Schmitt, *La Raison des gestes*.

[7] Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*.

[8] Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, p. 262.

[9] See the note in the edition of *De institutione*, p. 100, note 1.

[10] *De institutione*, Prologus: 'Quia, fratres, largiente Domino, de uana conuersatione huius seculi, per desiderium sanctum conuersi estis, et ad ipsum qui fecit uos, tota mentis intentione ac uoto redire disponitis, oportet uos nunc ipsam uiam discere, per quam possitis ad illum quem queritis peruenire' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 18, ll. 1–5; PL 176, col. 925A).

humour and a touch of lightness. The life to which the novices have converted is the road to the fatherland. The treatise could be read as a sustained explanation of a biblical text: goodness, discipline and knowledge, *bonitas, disciplina et scientia* (Vulgate Psalm 118. 66; compare Psalm 119. 66) have to be learned to reach the fatherland. No one can attain bliss but by virtue; virtue has to be learned by discipline; discipline has to be guided by knowledge.[11]

In the explanation of *scientia* and *disciplina* some underlying pedagogical mechanisms are revealed. Important is a constant self-scrutiny, labelled under *ratio*, and *inspectio operum ac morum*.[12] This introspection is more sophisticated than presented, for example, in Peter Damian's work, as the reader has to take into account a wider range of elements and different situations. Another component in the pedagogy of *De institutione* is the traditional idea of learning as imprinting oneself with a seal. Here, too, the reader is urged to distinguish between several layers of this process, whether it is the seal of an exemplary saint, or the imprint, slowly achieved, by accustoming oneself to certain behaviour. *Forma* and its derivatives figure prominently in *De institutione*. The behavioural aspect is connected to the most striking element of Hugh's treatise: the close connection between the outer and the inner man.

Hugh begins by exploring *scientia*, referring to 'the knowledge to live rightly': *scientia recte vivendi*.[13] He explains that man should gain the knowledge necessary for a just and respectable life in several ways. Rational investigation of proper behaviour according to different circumstances and places is the first way. This serves to reveal not only what is to be done, but when and where, and in what circumstances, thus enabling the novice to form his conduct according to a rhetoric of behaviour, just as he will dispose of a rhetoric of speech.[14] Here, more than in other works of Hugh or of other monastic writers, the canon or monk is surrounded by other people. He must be aware of the influence of his behaviour on them, and attune his behaviour in accordance with their dignity and position. This reflects Hugh's concern with the exemplary and teaching effects of the canon's life. But the novice's behaviour in relation to others also functions as a yardstick of his own

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[11] *De institutione*, Prologus: 'Ad beatitudinem autem nemo uenire potest, nisi per uirtutem, et uirtus non alio modo ueraciter apprehenditur, nisi disciplina uirtutis non negligenter custodiatur […] Postremo, quia uidit neminem seruare posse disciplinam boni operis, qui non habeat scientiam uere discretionis'(Feiss and Sicard, p. 18, ll. 9–11, p. 20, ll. 30–33; PL 176, col. 925AB–926A).

[12] *De institutione* (Feiss and Sicard, p. 22, ll. 64–67; PL 176, col. 927A).

[13] *De institutione* (Feiss and Sicard, p. 22, l. 61; PL 176, col. 927A).

[14] *De institutione* (Feiss and Sicard, p. 22, l. 72 – p. 36, l. 266; PL 176, cols 927A–931B).

learning: his conduct is inferior or superior to the conduct of others, or congruous with it.[15]

The second way is teaching, *doctrina*, not to serve as material for verbal combat, *contentio verborum* (as, says Hugh, is usual in the schools) but to enable the novices to become disciples of truth. As Hugh tells them, they have come to the school of virtues.[16] At this point, a correspondence is established between inner and outer selves. Disputes and verbal quarrels originate in pride: 'If inside the heart did not first swell in pride, outside the tongue would not give up its guard of humility and let itself go in invectives.'[17]

The third way consists of imitating the example of saintly people. The traditional idea of the learner as wax is combined with the equally traditional concept of the saint, or the good man, as a seal:

> Why else do you think, brothers, that we should imitate the life and behaviour of the good, if not because by imitating them we are reformed to the likeness of a new life? In them, indeed, the form of the likeness of God is expressed, and thus, when we imprint them by imitation in ourselves, we ourselves are fashioned after the image of that same likeness.[18]

Again, the need for humility is emphasized: 'As wax will not receive the form of the seal unless it has been softened, likewise man cannot be bent to the form of virtue by the action of someone else, unless he first is softened by humility from the hardness of all pride and contradiction.'[19]

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[15] *De institutione* (Feiss and Sicard, p. 30, ll. 188–189; PL 176, col. 929D). Compare Bynum, 'The Spirituality of Regular Canons'.

[16] *De institutione*: 'Quoniam igitur ad scholam uirtutum erudiendi acceditis, scire debetis contentiones uerborum nullo modo deinceps ad uos pertinere' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 36, ll. 268–270; PL 176, col. 931B).

[17] *De institutione*: 'Nam quia rixe et contentiones uerborum de pestifera semper radice oriantur, dubium non est quoniam, nisi cor prius intrinsecus per elationem intumesceret, nequaquam lingua foris a custodia humilitatis sue in contumeliam uerborum se relaxaret' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 36, ll. 288–291; PL 176, col. 931D).

[18] *De institutione*: 'Quare putatis, fratres, uitam et conuersationem bonorum imitari precipimur, nisi ut per eorum imitationem ad noue uite similitudinem reformemur? In ipsis siquidem similitudinis Dei forma expressa est, et idcirco, cum eis per imitationem imprimimur, ad eiusdem similitudinis imaginem nos quoque figuramur' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 40, ll. 340–344; PL 176, col. 932D). On the metaphor of the seal see also Chapter 2, pp. 27, 43.

[19] *De institutione*: 'Sed sciendum est quia, sicut cera, nisi prius emollita fuerit, formam non recipit, sic et homo quidem per manum actionis aliene ad formam uirtutis non flectitur, nisi prius per humilitatem ab omni elationis et contradictionis rigore molliatur' (ed. Feiss and Sicard, p. 40, ll. 345–348; PL 176, cols 932D–933A).

The next way is reading of scripture, in which the novice has to pay attention to how it instructs on virtue, and where, once again, the reader should want more to be formed by scripture's precepts than to be encumbered by questions.[20] This technique of reading is developed more broadly in the *Didascalicon*.

What remains to be discussed in the first part of *De institutione* in relation to knowledge is the need of *circumspectio*: a constant self-probing of one's thoughts, speech, and actions. One should investigate one's deeds, their failures and success, to learn by the experience. First of all, one should not be misled by the ambiguity of one's state of mind (*affectus animi*), which may make one begin an action in good faith. Only the outcome makes the actual intention clear. Only by paying attention to the tendency of one's state of mind, can one really see what one's intention is, and maybe see the vice in it.[21] This simple truth will be shown to have a huge impact in *De sacramentis*, where Hugh discusses the question of whether man before the Fall could be said to have had virtues: even when man began to love his Creator, that was not at all praiseworthy, because he did not persevere.[22] The problem which Peter Damian confronted was that of the monk who was a monk in outer appearances only; outer and inner being two separate domains. For Hugh this simple dichotomy is much more complicated, necessitating a far more penetrating exploration of inner life and of the connection of this inner life with man's position in the world. It is by examining this ambivalence that Hugh comes to a much more complex view of the inner man than that formulated by Peter Damian. In the end, by his continuing *circumspectio*, the novice is striving for a transparency of inner self in an outer life. However—to continue the comparison with Peter Damian—this transparency does not reveal an immobile icon, but an actor who is ever trying to perform better, outwardly as well as inwardly.[23]

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[20] *De institutione* (Feiss and Sicard, p. 44, ll. 389–401; PL 176, cols 933D–934A).

[21] *De institutione*: 'Videtur enim quia sepe opus quod bona intentione inchoari creditur, tanto citius hominem in deceptionis laqueum precipitat, quanto, de intentionis sue principio securus, finem actionis non obseruat […] Item non consideratur quod nonnunquam euenire solet, ut affectus animi ita ambiguus sit ut nisi ex fine operis discernere non possit homo qualitatem sue intentionis. Si uero diligenter consideret ad quem finem tendat mentis affectio, tunc iam plane uitium esse cognoscitur in quo prius sibi animus falso de uirtute blandiebatur' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 46, ll. 413–423; PL 176, col. 934BC).

[22] *De sacramentis*, I, VI, 17: 'Etsi quidem amare creatorem suum coepit, hoc tamen omnino laudabile non fuit, quia non perseverauit; quia motus incipientis virtutis exstinctus est' (PL 176, col. 275A); see also the translation of *De sacramentis* by Roy J. Deferrari, *Hugh of Saint Victor on the Sacraments of the Christian Faith (De sacramentis)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1951), p. 107.

[23] This transparency is sometimes connected with the metaphor of 'the book of the heart', or 'the book of conscience'. See J. Leclercq, 'Aspects spirituels de la symbolique du livre au XIIe siècle', in *Mélanges de Lubac*, II (Paris: Aubier, 1964), 63–67; Chenu, *l' Eveil de la*

The second part of *De institutione novitiorum* is dedicated to *disciplina*. Discipline is defined as 'a good and respectable way of living, to which it is little not to do evil, but which studies to appear blameless throughout, even in those things which it does well'. It is 'an ordered movement of all parts of the body and a decent disposition in their shape and their action'.[24] Here the relation between outer and inner is central to Hugh's discussion. From the inconstancy of the mind inordinate motion is born, from ordering one's motions the mind will be strengthened to constancy. Although the root of the unrest is interior, the *disciplina* of the outer man will set off a process which will restore not only the outer but also an inner rest: 'Slowly the same form of virtue will by custom be imprinted on the mind as is conserved by discipline in the bodily posture.' [25] Here the same principle of 'imprinting' is invoked as in the example of the saints which one should impress on oneself as a seal. Four outer domains are of particular interest: clothing, gesture, talk, and table manners. Hugh's exegesis of some of the clothing habits of his contemporaries is ironical, for example when he describes how some arrange their dress in such a way that, in sweeping on the ground, it sweeps away the traces they leave. Others, hurling around and tossing their garments in the air, show their mind's levity by this very mobility of their dress. Hugh concludes:

> It wearies me to count all the little masks of vanity in which the foolish and the silly derive their pursuits from women, or even prostitutes, and with as much disgrace as credulity almost change their gender together with their habit. There are thousands of other ways in which the vainest and most superstitious men desire to offer themselves as a spectacle to the onlookers.[26]

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conscience, pp. 42–43, on the book of conscience, which is written in the heart. See also Eric Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

[24] *De institutione*: 'Disciplina est conuersatio bona et honesta, cui parum est malum non facere, sed studet etiam in his que bene agit per cuncta irreprehensibilis apparere. Item disciplina est membrorum omnium motus ordinatus et dispositio decens in omni habitu et actione' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 48, ll. 451–455; PL 176, col. 935AB). Compare *Didascalicon* III, 6: '[consideratur] in disciplina ut laudabiliter vivens mores cum scientia componat' in *Didascalicon De Studio Legendi*, ed. by Charles Henry Buttimer, Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Latin, X (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1939), p. 57.

[25] *De institutione*: 'Sicut enim de inconstantia mentis nascitur inordinata motio corporis, ita quoque, dum corpus per disciplinam stringitur, animus ad constantiam solidatur. Et paulatim intrinsecus mens ad quietem componitur, cum per discipline custodiam mali motus eius foras fluere non sinuntur. Integritas ergo uirtutis est, quando per internam mentis custodiam ordinate reguntur membra corporis' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 48, ll. 460–466; PL 176, col. 935B).

[26] *De institutione*: 'Tedet me omnia uanitatis oscilla numerare in quibus stulti et uecordes mulieribus, immo meretricibus, studia sua auferunt, et tanto dedecore quanta superstitione cum habitu pene sexum mutauerunt. Alii sunt mille modi in quibus homines uanissimi et superstitiosissimi spectaculum de se intuentibus prebere concupiscunt' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 52, ll. 522–527; PL 176, col. 936CD). The practical consequences of these behavioural ideals

This conclusion implies that Hugh's disapproval is connected to a transgression, of the boundaries between the sexes in this case. The desirability of a natural order governing behaviour is a recurring issue, as we shall see. As Hugh continues: 'Let them go away now, the pitiable and stupid people, ignorant of all decency.' It is as if he has been drawing the outside contours of the community, giving his novices a way to perceive how they have come to differ from their likes in the world, as much as warning them against these vices.[27] To the brothers Hugh is addressing, the body is simultaneously instrumental in and a manifestation of inner virtues, but it should not be more than that: however much it is adorned, what else is flesh but flesh: *quid est aliud caro quam caro*? 'What good will it do to seek glory in a garment that for some time clings to the outside, and not to consider the rotting corruption that is in us and will always be there?' Those who love religion should prefer the adornments of virtue to the pomp of dress.[28]

When describing gesture, again the connection with inner life is emphasized: when the mind relaxes from inner watchfulness, the body behaves inordinately. Just as there is affinity between the vices, so the gestures that go with them exhibit a perverse *concordia*. These gestures spring from inner corruption.[29] Bad desires, when they are restrained by discipline from flowing outward, will in the end disappear.[30] Hugh seems to describe the grotesque figures of Romanesque churches: someone who listens with open mouth, instead of using only his ears, or some even

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in church life play a role in *De sacramentis* when Hugh discusses the different orders in the church, see *De sacramentis* II, III, 7, PL 176, col. 424C: readers have to pay attention to the *pronuntiatio* and presentation, aiming at being heard rather than being seen.

[27] *De institutione*: 'Eant ergo nunc miseri et stulti ac omnis honestatis ignari, eant et comant pannos suos qui non intelligunt quam iuste in uiris religiosam uitam professis cultus pretiosarum uestium reprehenditur' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 54, ll. 538–541; PL 176, col. 937A). See Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, pp. 254–268, on *De Institutione* as a warning against vices of the aristocracy, from which Saint-Victor drew most of its pupils (p. 265). In my view Jaeger goes too far when he concludes that outer behaviour/body is the 'locus' (p. 260) of virtue, overseeing the interaction between outer and inner. The contrast he sees in this respect between Hugh and Bernard of Clairvaux (p. 269) is thus also exaggerated.

[28] *De institutione*: 'Quantumcumque excolatur et ornetur, quid est aliud caro quam caro? Quid igitur prodest in habitu qui foris ad tempus adheret gloriam querere, et corruptionis putredinem que in nobis est et semper permanet non considerare?' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 56, ll. 572–575; PL 176, col. 937D).

[29] *De institutione*: 'et quemadmodum uitia de quibus nascuntur intra se multum non discrepant, ita ipsi quoque motus exteriores quamdam ad inuicem concordiam peruersitatis obseruant' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 58, ll. 610–613; PL 176, col. 938C).

[30] *De institutione*: 'Propterea multum ualet disciplina ad coercendos prauos motus animi, quatinus mala desideria, dum per custodiam discipline stringuntur ne foras effluant, tandem aliquando etiam interius surgere ac moueri omnino desuescant' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 66, l. 742 – p. 68, l. 746; PL 176, col. 941B).

who as thirsty dogs put out their tongues; or some who, when speaking, roll with their eyes; or someone who, as though both ears were not made to listen, holds out one to the speaker in a distorted gesture. All these gestures, and the thousand distortions of nose and mouth, deform the beauty of the face and the order of discipline: the face is a mirror of discipline, betraying everything.[31] At the same time, by explaining these gestures in terms of scriptural texts, Hugh leads the reader to associate them with biblical images. Sometimes it is hard to avoid the impression that Hugh is writing satire although he denies it emphatically, excusing himself for being immoderate in his descriptions,[32] before turning to a discussion of the well-ordered body. The body is like a republic: with this interesting reversal of a common metaphor Hugh indicates that each member should fulfil its proper task, *officium*. If one member appropriates the office of the other, the *concordia universitatis* is troubled, making way for the *concordia perversitatis* of which he spoke before.[33] In all this, apart from ideals of behaviour from a revived classical tradition (as Jaeger demonstrates) one can see a concern with reform of the inner life, through first reforming outer behaviour. One has to curtail all that is superfluous and thus inappropriate or even harmful in gesture, in the same way as, in Hugh's other works, one has to eliminate superfluous thoughts, by concentrating on what really matters.

Hugh identifies five categories of speech: what, to whom, where, when, and how.[34] More elaborately than in the passage on behaviour, Hugh applies the distinction of circumstances known from rhetoric to the reader's *disciplina*.[35] No idle, useless, dishonest or harmful words should be spoken. These qualities can be distinguished depending on the speaker or the listener, or another person about whom one might speak; and, then again, depending on their age, knowledge, function and condition. The person to whom one speaks is important, as the speaker has to ask whether what he says is for his own benefit or for the benefit of the other. When good people can hope to contribute to the betterment of a bad person, they must talk, but when they see that the latter is hardened, they should not risk becoming corrupted. Hugh gives an example of how one should adjust what one says to another person: if we want to praise constancy, we should address the timid,

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[31] *De institutione* (Feiss and Sicard, p.70, ll. 778–780; PL 176, cols 941C–942A).

[32] *De institutione*: 'Sed ne forte satiram potius quam doctrinam edere uideamur, cum plurima adhuc enumeranda supersint, modestie hic quoque obliuisci non debemus' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 70, 796–798; PL 176, col. 942C).

[33] *De institutione*: 'Est enim quasi quedam respublica corpus humanum, in quo singulis membris sua officia distributa sunt' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 72, ll. 822–824; PL 176, col. 943A). On this metaphor see Schmitt, *La Raison des gestes*, pp. 189–193.

[34] *De institutione* (Feiss and Sicard, pp. 74–91; PL 176, cols 943D–949A). See Carla Casagrande, Silvana Vecchio, *Les Péchés de la langue*, translated from the Italian by Philippe Baillet (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1991), pp. 69–73.

[35] *De institutione* (Feiss and Sicard, p. 22, l. 72 – p. 36, l. 266; PL 176, cols 927A–931B).

not the proud, because under the pretext of constancy they would only be confirmed in their pride.[36] One should consider the place: in some places only silence is appropriate; in some places one can only talk about spiritual matters, in other places, matters pertaining to material life can be discussed. But there is no place for idle and superfluous words. Given this limitation, there is also a time for everything. As to the manner of speech, modesty and humility in gesture should accompany a soft and melodious voice.

The last part of *De institutione* is about table manners, where the other disciplines come together: one should consider one's conduct and one's eating habits, keeping silent, not looking around with curiosity, not gesturing immoderately. Moreover, the quantity of food consumed and the way of eating and drinking need also to be considered: again Hugh seems to indulge in parody in his description of, for example, those who feign indigestion when presented with anything but delicate food.[37] One gets the impression that the reader is offered a critique of the outside world and thus a boundary between himself and that world, as much as a guideline to monastic eating—which includes a reminder that what is enough for one, may be too much or too little for another. The goal is to keep the appropriate measure.

The most interesting point in *De institutione* is Hugh's reason for paying so much attention to outward behaviour: in this instruction to young people, modelling the outer man is seen as the starting point for changing the corresponding inner attitudes. Just as uncontrolled behaviour (in listening, for instance) betrays a chaotic interior, controlling this behaviour will contribute to reforming the inner chaos into a state of order and harmony. There is thus a strong emphasis on the interconnection between outer and inner, an interconnection which not only works at the level of the novice trying to form his life, but which, as we shall see, runs through the whole world, where outer, visible things point to the world of the invisible. Thus the connection between inner and outer is more complicated than it was for Peter Damian. It is not just a question of possibly deceptive outer appearances. At the root of the possibility of deception is an inner ambiguity, which Hugh touched upon

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[36] *De institutione*: 'Verbi gratia, quando constantiam laudare uolumus, ad pusillanimes, non ad superbos sermonem nostrum dirigere debemus, quia cum uitium superbie sub pretextu constantie nonnunquam se contegat, si ceperimus superbis laudare constantiam, dum eos ad uirtutem hortari credimus, amplius in suo uitio confirmamus' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 80, ll. 947–952; PL 176, col. 945CD). This passage is reminiscent of Gregory the Great's *Regula Pastoralis*, where he urges the preacher to preach in such a way that it suits all members of his audience, with their different vices, for example preaching humility to the proud in a way that does not increase the fear of the timid: 'quatenus sic superbis praedicetur humilitas, ut tamen timidis non augeatur metus, sic timidis infundatur auctoritas, ut tamen superbis non crescat effrenatio' (*Regula Pastoralis* III, 36, PL 77, col. 121D).

[37] *De institutione* (Feiss and Sicard, pp. 92–98; PL 176, cols 949A–952. This example on p. 94, ll. 1163–1166; PL 176, col. 950AB).

when he discussed the need for *inspectio morum*. This, as will be seen later, corresponds with man's intermediate position in the world, between the visible and the invisible. And if inner harmony is more difficult to achieve than *De institutione* might suggest, it is time for the reader to move on to Hugh's other works.

Learning to Read

The *doctrina* and *meditatio Scripturarum* that were touched upon in *De institutione novitiorum* receive a lengthier treatment in the *Didascalicon*, where Hugh presents a theory of learning, or rather, reading.[38] Although probably written for a wider public of learners it certainly was relevant to the novices addressed in *De institutione*. As Hugh says in the prologue, there are two things by which every man advances in knowledge: reading and meditation. In the *Didascalicon*, Hugh mainly discusses reading, leaving a more elaborate treatment of meditation to a separate work. By explaining the proper content, sequence and way of reading, *lectio*, Hugh opens the way to an understanding of the field of knowledge, its hierarchies, and its goal: ultimate wisdom, 'that wisdom in which the Form of the Perfect Good stands fixed'.[39] This points the way to the true object of human knowledge, and to man's original dignity, at the same time diagnosing what is needed to attain this dignity. Self-knowledge is central, because it is man's way to wisdom:

> His immortal mind, illuminated by wisdom, beholds its own principle and recognizes how unfitting it is for it to seek anything outside itself when what it is in itself can be enough for it. It is written on the tripod of Apollo: γνώθι σεαυτον, that is 'know thyself', for surely, if man had not forgotten his origin, he would recognize that everything subject to change is nothing.[40]

We will discover later the imaginary character of this original self-sufficiency. The nothingness of changeable things will also reappear in a more complicated setting.

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[38] See *Didascalicon De Studio Legendi* (Buttimer). I follow the translation by Jerome Taylor, *The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961). See also Stammberger, '"Via ad ipsum sunt scientia, disciplina, bonitas"'. See also Jean Châtillon. 'Le "Didascalicon" de Hugues de Saint-Victor', *Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale*, 9 (1965–1966), 539–552.

[39] *Didascalicon* I, 1: 'sapientia, in qua perfecti boni forma consistit' (Buttimer, p. 4, ll. 4–5; trans. Taylor, p. 46).

[40] *Didascalicon* I, 1: 'immortalis quippe animus sapientia illustratus respicit principium suum et quam sit indecorum agnoscit, ut extra se quidquam quaerat, cui quod ipse est, satis esse poterat. scriptum legitur in tripode Apollinis: gnoti seauton, id est, cognosce te ipsum, quia nimirum homo si non originis suae immemor esset, omne quod mutabilitati obnoxium est, quam sit nihil, agnosceret' (Buttimer, p. 4, ll. 7–13; trans. Taylor, p. 46).

In the context of this introductory part of the *Didascalicon* Hugh first addresses the loss of self-sufficiency:

> For the mind, stupefied by bodily sensations and enticed out of itself by sensuous forms, has forgotten what it was, and, because it does not remember that it was anything different, believes that it is nothing except what is seen. But we are restored through instruction (*doctrina*), so that we may recognize our nature and learn not to seek outside ourselves what we can find within.[41]

Restorative instruction is the subject matter of the *Didascalicon*. Whereas in other works Hugh had treated special details of learning, such as grammar and exegesis,[42] in the *Didascalicon* Hugh presents an encyclopaedic view of learning, of the system of the *artes* and of the procedures to be followed to attain wisdom. Two things are present in man: good and evil; nature and the defective state of it. The good has been corrupted and has to be restored; the evil has to be removed, to regain integrity. Here Hugh introduces the two elements which are necessary for man's restoration— knowledge and virtue: 'The integrity of human nature is attained in two things—in knowledge and in virtue, and in these lies our sole likeness to the supernal and divine substances.'[43] The necessity of this dual pursuit, of *scientia* and *virtus*, to restore the lost likeness of God—that is, to realize one's original self—runs through all of Hugh's works. The importance of proper knowledge in restoring the image of God in man is the motive running through the *Didascalicon*. This work shows how Hugh's project is at the same time embedded in the broadest possible dimensions of the world and firmly anchored to a pedagogical tradition, in which the *artes* have a defining role in providing access to this world. Man's learning is as much subject to *disciplina* as the novice's outer behaviour.

Hugh begins by distinguishing between secular writings and divine writings. Philosophy, in Hugh's view, contains both. In fact, as Hugh explains in Book II of the *Didascalicon*, it contains all knowledge, which can be divided in the theoretical,

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[41] *Didascalicon* I, 1: 'animus enim, corporeis passionibus consopitus et per sensibiles formas extra semetipsum abductus, oblitus est quid fuerit, et, quia nil aliud fuisse se meminit, nil praeter quod videtur esse credit. reparamur autem per doctrinam, ut nostram agnoscamus naturam, et ut discamus extra non quaerere quod in nobis possumus invenire' (Buttimer, p. 6, ll. 4–9; trans. Taylor, p. 47).

[42] See, for example, *De grammatica*, in *Hugonis de Sancto Victore opera propaedeutica*, ed. by Roger Baron, University of Notre Dame Publications in Mediaeval Studies, 20 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), pp. 75–156; *De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris*, PL 175, 9–28. On Hugh's theory and application of literal exegesis see Jan van Zwieten, 'The Place and Significance of Literal Exegesis in Hugh of St. Victor: An Analysis of his Notes on the Pentateuch, the Book of Judges, and the Four Books of Kings' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Amsterdam, 1992).

[43] *Didascalicon* I, 5: 'integritas vero naturae humanae duobus perficitur, scientia et virtute, quae nobis cum supernis et divinis substantiis similitudo sola est' (Buttimer, p. 12, ll. 13–15; trans. Taylor, p. 52).

the practical, the mechanical, and the logical, followed by further subdivisions. The theoretical branch of philosophy includes 'what the Greeks called theology', meaning the discourse concerning the divine (in other works Hugh clearly distinguishes the *mundana theologia* from the *theologia divina*[44]); mathematics—with its subdivision of arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy; and physics. Practical philosophy contains ethics, economics and politics. The mechanical arts include the theory of activities such as navigation, agriculture and medicine. Logic can be divided in grammar and reasoning, which includes rhetoric and dialectic.

Whereas the distinction between the theoretical and the practical, together with the logical, is conventional, Hugh's addition of the mechanical arts is new.[45] Hugh distinguishes the theory of these arts from their performance—for example, the theory of agriculture belongs to the philosopher, while its performance is the domain of the farmer: knowledge of the mechanical arts is important in the interpretation of scripture.[46] Hugh connects their development with man's position in nature. Man alone was brought forth naked and unarmed, and thus nature provided him with the ability to invent, by his own reasoning, those things which other creatures have by nature.[47] The inclusion of the mechanical arts in philosophy is incorporated in Hugh's view of the salvationary role of learning. At the same time, his discussion of their origins betrays an acknowledgement of man's dual nature as both spiritual and physical, and of the importance of man's physical life.[48] The arts, which are thus part of philosophy, that is the love of wisdom, are concerned with the restoration of the corrupted image: 'This is what they intend, namely, to restore within us the divine

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[44] See, for example, *Commentaria in Hierarchiam coelestem* I, 1 (PL 175, cols 926D–927A).

[45] On the divisions of philosophy see Taylor's 'Introduction', pp. 7–19. See also Pierre Hadot, 'Les divisions des parties de philosophie', in Pierre Hadot, *Études de philosophie ancienne* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1998), pp. 125–158.

[46] *Didascalicon* I, 4 (Buttimer, p. 11, ll. 20–23; trans. Taylor, p. 51). On the relevance of the mechanical arts in Hugh's biblical exegesis see Van Zwieten, 'The Place and Significance of Literal Exegesis in Hugh of St. Victor', pp. 61, 87–88.

[47] *Didascalicon* I, 9 (Buttimer, p. 17, ll. 5–18; trans. Taylor, p. 56).

[48] On the novelty of Hugh's treatment of the mechanical arts and its signification within the wider history of technology see George Ovitt, Jr., *The Restoration of Perfection: Labor and Technology in Medieval Culture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987) esp. pp. 107–136; Elspeth Whitney, *Paradise Restored: The Mechanical Arts from Antiquity through the Thirteenth Century*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 80, 1 (1990) (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1990), esp. pp. 82–127. I would like to thank Cary J. Nederman for these references. Nederman has written about the reconsideration of the mechanical arts in the twelfth century (which began with Hugh's *Didascalicon*) and its implications, from John of Salisbury onwards. For a re-evaluation of the role of its practitioners in the body politic, see his 'Mechanics and Citizens: The Reception of the Aristotelian Idea of Citizenship in Late Medieval Europe', *Vivarium*, 40 (2002), 75–102.

likeness [...] The more we are conformed to the divine nature, the more do we possess wisdom.'[49] The arts, especially the seven liberal arts, are the best instruments on the way to complete knowledge of philosophical truth.[50]

Apart from natural endowment, what is necessary for study is practice and discipline.[51] Among a further discussion of the conditions for learning, Hugh lists not only aptitude and memory, both of which must be practised, but also treats the proper ways of expounding a text—according to the letter, the sense and the inner meaning.[52] Humility, moreover, is the starting point of discipline, prompting one to hold no knowledge in contempt and to learn gladly from all.[53] Conducive to study are also silence, earnestness in considering things and parsimony.[54]

Hugh finally recommends 'a foreign soil', as an opportunity for practising leaving transitory things behind, providing the desirable detachment:

> The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native soil is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land. The tender soul has fixed his love on one spot in the world; the strong man has extended his love to all places; the perfect man has extinguished his. From boyhood I have dwelt on foreign soil, and I know with what grief sometimes the mind takes leave of the narrow hearth of a peasant's hut, and I know too, how frankly it afterwards disdains marble firesides and panelled halls.[55]

Whatever their exact significance as an autobiographical reference, in these 'hauntingly beautiful lines' (as Edward Saïd has called them), exile, so important as a metaphor for man's spiritual alienation from his origin, is a paradoxical

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[49] *Didascalicon* II, 1: 'hoc ergo omnes artes agunt, hoc intendunt, ut divina similitudo in nobis reparetur, quae nobis forma est, Deo natura, cui quanto magis conformamur tanto magis sapimus' (Buttimer, p. 23, ll. 17–19; trans. Taylor, p. 61).

[50] *Didascalicon* III, 3 (Buttimer, pp. 52–54; trans. Taylor, pp. 86–87).

[51] *Didascalicon* III, 6 (Buttimer, p. 57; trans. Taylor, p. 90).

[52] *Didascalicon* III, 8 (Buttimer, p. 58; trans. Taylor, pp. 91–92). On memory and discipline see *Didascalicon* III, 11–12 (Buttimer, pp. 60–61; trans. Taylor, pp. 93–94).

[53] *Didascalicon* III, 13 (Buttimer, pp. 61–64; trans. Taylor, pp. 94–97).

[54] *Didascalicon* III, 16–18 (Buttimer, pp. 67–69; trans. Taylor, pp. 99–100).

[55] *Didascalicon* III, 19: 'delicatus ille est adhuc cui patria dulcis est; fortis autem iam, cui omne solum patria est; perfectus vero, cui mundus totus exsilium est. ille mundo amorem fixit, iste sparsit, hic exstinxit. ego a puero exsulavi, et scio quo maerore animus artum aliquando pauperis tugurii fundum deserat, qua libertate postea marmoreos lares et tecta laqueata despiciat' (Buttimer, p. 69, ll. 13–18; trans. Taylor, p. 101). See the notes in Taylor for the classical references in Hugh's evocation of the peasant's hut, the marble and the panelled halls. Compare Hugh's *Homiliae In Ecclesiasten* XVI: 'electi vero temporales dolores patienter sustinent, ut ad ea, quae promissa sunt, gaudia aeternitatis possint pervenire: et in eorum respectu quidquid transitorium est si amarum videtur, non metuunt; si dulce, non concupiscunt' (PL 175, col. 226D).

achievement as much as a human condition to be deplored. 'Exile is predicated on the existence of, love for, and bond with, one's native place; what is true of all exile is not that home and love of home are lost, but that loss is inherent in the very existence of both.'[56] This inherent loss, not just of home and love of home, but of the world and love of the world, will reappear in Hugh's other works.

Hugh's view of the arts is connected with the Augustinian notion that, in scripture in particular, not only are words signs, but things, or realities (*res*), are signs as well—sometimes even more so than words.[57] One needs the arts, including the knowledge of things, to be able to read scripture, which has three ways of conveying meaning: history, allegory and tropology.[58] In his exposition of these meanings, and of how the student should proceed to master these, Hugh draws an architectural comparison (borrowed from Gregory the Great) with the construction of buildings, 'where first the foundation is laid, then the structure is raised upon it, and finally, when the work is all finished, the house is decorated by the laying of colour'.[59] With this image Hugh goes on to delineate how the student can build his knowledge, and, as far as that knowledge is one part of it, regain the integrity of human nature.[60]

Meditation and Prayer

Having thus completed his theory of reading, Hugh concludes that the remaining part of learning as he had announced it in the introduction of the *Didascalicon*—meditation—deserves a special treatise. Meditation, as he explains, takes its point of departure in reading, *lectio*, but it is

> bound by none of reading's rules or precepts. For it delights to range along open ground, where it fixes its free gaze upon the contemplation of truth, drawing together

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[56] Edward Saïd, 'Reflections on Exile', in *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta Books, 2001), pp. 173–186 (p. 185).

[57] *Didascalicon* V, 3 (Buttimer, pp. 96–97; trans. Taylor, pp. 121–122). For the translation of *res* as 'reality' (réalités) see Gilbert Dahan, *L'Exégèse chrétienne de la Bible en Occident médiéval: XIIe–XIVe siècle* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1999), p. 302.

[58] *Didascalicon* V, 2 (Buttimer, pp. 95–96; trans. Taylor, p. 120).

[59] *Didascalicon* VI, 2: 'in quo illud ad memoriam revocare non inutile est, quod in aedificiis fieri conspicitur, ubi primum quidem fundamentum ponitur, dehinc fabrica superaedificatur, ad ultimum consummato opere domus colore superducto vestitur' (Buttimer, p. 113, ll. 17–21; trans. Taylor, p. 135). Compare Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, Epistola ad Leandrum 3, ed. by Marcus Adriaen, CCSL 143 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1979), p. 4.

[60] See *Didascalicon* I, 5 (Buttimer, p. 12, l. 5; trans. Taylor, p. 52).

now these, now those causes of things, or now penetrating into profundities, leaving nothing doubtful, nothing obscure.[61]

In *De meditatione* the emphasis is on man's conduct, although the free-floating character of meditation is not lost. In this work meditation is called 'an assiduous investigation of the mode, the cause, and the reason of everything'.[62] Hugh distinguishes three subjects of meditation: created things, scripture, and conduct.[63] He deals very briefly with creation: admiration of creation provokes questions, questioning provokes investigation, investigation results in discovery.[64] The second section elaborates the way in which reading, *lectio*, 'delivers the material for knowing the truth, and meditation adjusts it, while prayer lifts it up, work puts it into practice and contemplation exults in it'.[65] Hugh also touches briefly on the threefold exegesis of scripture. In tropology, meditation facilitates knowledge of what is to be done: 'what enlightens towards the understanding of virtue, what nourishes the affect, what teaches the form of life towards the journey of virtue'.[66]

The main part of *De meditatione* is dedicated to conduct, including inner conduct, and considers one's state of mind, or feelings (*affectus*), thoughts and works. Here Hugh returns to what he had discussed in *De institutione*. As far as one's *affectus* are concerned, one should pay attention that they are right and sincere, or in other words, directed to the right object and in the right way. Thoughts and affections are closely connected. In thoughts one should inspect that they be pure and ordered.

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[61] *Didascalicon* III, 10: 'Meditatio est cogitatio frequens cum consilio, quae causam et originem, modum et utilitatem uniuscuiusque rei prudenter investigat. meditatio principium sumit a lectione, nullis tamen stringitur regulis aut praeceptis lectionis. delectatur enim quodam aperto decurrere spatio, ubi liberam contemplandae veritati aciem affigat, et nunc has, nunc illas rerum causas perstringere, nunc autem profunda quaeque penetrare, nihil anceps, nihil obscurum relinquere' (Buttimer, p. 59, ll. 13–19; trans. Taylor, pp. 92–93).

[62] *De meditatione*: 'Meditatio est frequens cogitatio modum et causam et rationem uniuscuiusque rei investigans' in *Hugues de Saint-Victor: six opuscules spirituels*, ed. by Roger Baron, SC 155 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1969), pp. 44–59 (p. 44, ll. 1–2). On the place of *meditatio* in the whole range of spiritual exercises, see Patrice Sicard, *Diagrammes médiévaux et exégèse visuelle. Le Libellus de formatione arche de Hugues de Saint-Victor*, Bibliotheca Victorina, IV (Paris: Brepols, 1993), especially Chapter 3, pp. 193–253.

[63] *De meditatione*: 'Tria sunt genera meditationum: unum in creaturis, unum in scripturis, unum in moribus' (Baron, p. 44, ll. 4–5).

[64] *De meditatione* I: 'In primo admiratio quaestionem generat, quaestio investigationem, investigatio inventionem' (Baron, p. 44, ll. 8–9).

[65] *De meditatione* II, 1: 'Primo lectio ad cognoscendam veritatem materiam ministrat, meditatio coaptat, oratio sublevat, operatio componit, contemplatio in ipsa exsultat' (Baron, p. 46, ll. 16–19).

[66] *De meditatione* II, 3: 'In tropologia, meditatio operatur quem fructum dicta afferant, exquirens quid faciendum insinuent […] quid ad intelligentiam virtutis illuminet, quid nutriat affectionem, quid formam vivendi ad iter virtutis edoceat' (Baron, p. 48, ll. 57–63).

They are pure when they neither originate from bad *affectus* nor engender them. They are ordered when they come in their time: one should not think of prayer during reading, or the other way round. Works should be done with a good intention—that is, a simple and right intention, without malice and without ignorance. Not only should works be begun with a good intention, they should be pursued till the end with the fervour of perseverance: as Hugh later explains in *De sacramentis,* it was this perseverance which was lacking in paradise.[67] Hugh distinguishes between outer and inner in his consideration of *meditatio in moribus*. As far as outer appearances are concerned, one should consider what is decent as an example for others; as to the inner aspect, one's conscience should be clean.[68] Again, the ideal of transparency resounds, externalizing, as it were, the inner movements. The meditation on conduct also investigates where the heart's movements come from, and where they go. Their origin can be hidden or manifest, and manifestly good or manifestly bad. What comes from a good origin is from God; that which is from a bad origin, is either from the devil, or from the flesh: these are the three 'authors' who make their suggestions to the heart. As to hidden or dubious origins, things have to be scrutinized for their possible outcome, and then can be judged accordingly.[69] Hugh's ideal of moderation and tolerance of human limitation shines through when he explains how meditation on conduct also helps to avoid affliction and absorption. Affliction (*afflictio*) leads to bitterness; absorption (*occupatio*) destroys tranquillity. Therefore, in order 'not to be embittered, the mind should patiently accept its impossibilities; not to be too much absorbed, it should not extend beyond the measure of its possibilities'.[70] With a further insight into the source of much frustration, Hugh ends his *De meditatione*. One should try to make progress, but without being disappointed about the present: 'He who always seeks to do what he does not do, and is disgusted with what he does, does not enjoy the present and will not be satisfied by the future.'[71]

Reading, *lectio*, and meditation are part of a range of spiritual exercises. Read separately as an instruction to meditation, *De meditatione* seems to allow for a

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[67] See *De sacramentis* I, VI 17: 'Etsi quidem amare creatorem suum coepit, hoc tamen omnino laudabile non fuit, quia non perseveravit; quia motus incipientis virtutis exstinctus est' (PL 176, col. 275A; trans. Deferrari, p. 107).

[68] *De meditatione* III, 1 (Baron, pp. 48–50).

[69] *De meditatione* III, 3 (Baron, pp. 52–54).

[70] *De meditatione* III, 7: 'Ne igitur male amaricetur animus, suam impossibilitatem patienter sustineat; ne autem male occupetur, possibilitatem suam extra mensuram suam non extendat' (Baron, p. 56, l. 180 – p. 58, l. 183).

[71] *De meditatione* III, 8: 'Item meditatio morum alia consideratione formam vivendi diiudicat, probans nec bonum esse ea quae non fiunt impatienter appetere, nec bonum esse ea quae fiunt insipienter fastidire. Qui enim semper quod non facit appetit et quod facit fastidit, nec praesentibus fruitur, nec futuris satiatur' (Baron, p. 58, ll. 184–189).

disconnection of the link between reader and (biblical) texts: the reader can use the text as an instrument or manual for his own meditation, almost independent from texts and their rumination. In Hugh's own great meditative treatises, meditation's free gaze never loses sight of the text. Hugh also firmly re-establishes the link with the text in prayer, for which meditation is a precondition, in his *De virtute orandi*.[72] Reading the psalms, where so many different feelings (*affectus*) are evoked, one should carefully pay attention to see which *affectus* they serve, and excite one's heart by all strength to that feeling.[73] There is a hermeneutical circle here—a constant interaction between *affectus* and understanding: when the reader has the *affectus* of which the words of the psalms are speaking, by that very *affectus* he will better know the force (*virtutem*) of the words; and, by his understanding, strengthen his feeling to a greater devotion. This view alone of how the *affects* work should warn modern readers of reading too much affective devotion in Hugh's (as well as other twelfth-century authors') texts.[74] It also shows how reading, meditating and praying are interconnected.

In other works Hugh returns to his distinctions between reading, meditation and contemplation. They can be seen to correspond with alternative distinctions.[75] On the level of the texts, however, they are not always so easy to distinguish. The dual way of knowledge and virtue, of thought and feeling, pervades most of Hugh's work. The affective learning of the reader is at its most pregnant in *De virtute orandi* but it applies to the whole range of *exercitia spiritualia* of which prayer is a part. As we shall now see, it is presupposed in Hugh's most philosophical and theological works as well.

The World as Paideia

The possibility of the knowledge to which the *Didascalicon* and *De meditatione* give access, and which is necessary to restore the lost likeness, is founded on the way the

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[72] *De virtute orandi*, in Feiss and Sicard (eds), *L'Oeuvre de Hugues de Saint-Victor*, I, 126–171; as *De modo orandi* in PL 176, cols 977–1018.

[73] *De virtute orandi* 12: 'Vnusquisque ergo cum in oratione uel psalmos uel alias quascunque scripturas decantat, diligenter consideret cui affectui seruiant, et ad illum affectum toto nisu cor suum excitet, ad quem id quod loquitur magis pertinere uidet, quia si uerborum que loquitur affectum habuerit, per affectum ipsum melius uerborum uirtutem cognoscet et intelligentiam capiet, et per uerborum intelligentiam in maiorem deuotionem affectum accendet' (Feiss and Sicard, p. 148, ll. 331–338; PL 176, col. 984A).

[74] See the note by D. Poirel in the edition by Feiss and Sicard, p. 169, n. 44, and the article mentioned there by J. Leclercq 'Culte liturgique et prière intime dans le monachisme au Moyen Age', *La Maison-Dieu*, 69 (1962), 39–55 (individual prayer still fitted within the collective prayer of liturgy).

[75] Sicard, *Diagrammes médiévaux*, pp. 193–198 (p. 205).

world *is*. Indeed, the very division of philosophy as treated in the *Didascalicon* was based on the nature of the world. This nature of the world, in its turn, conditions man's existence. Hugh explores this principle further in his *Commentaria in Hierarchiam coelestem* (*Commentary on the Celestial Hierarchy*) by Pseudo-Denys, and in *De sacramentis christianae fidei*. These works contain his theology and philosophy, but at the same time they meet his definition of meditation as 'an assiduous thinking, investigating the mode, the cause, and the reason for everything, that is, what it is, why it is, and how it is.' These works are thus part of the broader program of *exercitia spiritualia*. I shall first briefly draw attention to a few aspects of Hugh's *In Hierarchiam coelestem*, and then turn to *De sacramentis*.

Man in the World

With his commentary on Pseudo-Denys' *Celestial Hierarchy* (known in the West through the ninth-century translations by Hilduin of Saint-Denis and, more importantly, by John Scotus Eriugena) Hugh contributed to the renewed interest in neo-Platonic philosophy of the twelfth century. The point of departure for Hugh's *In Hierarchiam coelestem* is Pseudo-Denys' view of the hierarchical ordering of the world.[76] Three hierarchies, the divine, angelic and human hierarchy, constitute the world. The emphasis in Pseudo-Denys' work, as in those of Eriugena and Hugh, is on hierarchy as illumination from the divine through the other hierarchies. Hierarchy also works in converting lower to higher. In his governing of the world, God wanted participants in his power, not because he needed help, but because rational creatures would be made more sublime.[77] Thus he made rational creatures participate in various ways, according to their abilities. As Hugh explains:

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[76] *In Hierarchiam coelestem* (hereafter *In Hier. coel.*), PL 175, cols 923–1154. See H. Weisweiler, 'Die Ps.-Dionysiuskommentare "In Coelestem Hierarchiam" des Skotus Eriugena und Hugo von St. Viktor', *Revue de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 19 (1952), 26–47. Weisweiler concluded that Hugh knew Eriugena's commentary through an intermediary commentary; see however the discussion in Lenka Karfíková, *"De esse ad pulchrum esse". Schönheit in der Theologie Hugos von St. Viktor*, Bibliotheca Victorina, VIII (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), Chapter 4, pp. 179–180, and the literature mentioned there. Hugh worked from Eriugena's translation (a second, revised version) which had been glossed by Anastasius, the papal librarian. See also E. Kleineidam, 'Literargeschichtliche Bemerkungen zur Eucharistielehre Hugos von St. Viktor', *Scholastik*, 24 (1949), 564–566 (passages on the eucharist in *De sacramentis* derived from *In Hierarchiam coelestem*). On Hugh's attitude towards Eriugena see also Jean Châtillon, 'Hugues de Saint-Victor: critique de Jean Scot', in *Jean Scot Érigène et l'histoire de la philosophie*, Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 561, Laon 7–12 juillet 1975 (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1977), pp. 415–431.

[77] *In Hier. coel*. I, 2: 'Ipse igitur rerum omnium conditor Deus, cujus ineffabilis majestas, et indeficiens virtus, potens erat sola gubernare quod creaverat sola, voluit in rerum a se

> This is the greatness of the rational creature, and its sublime state, and its marvellous dignity, by which it is worthy to rule amongst the works of its Maker, having received the strength from him, and sharing power with him. This strength, as it is distributed by one strength and one power—in various and manifold ways according to the extent of bestowing and participating in the grace and beauty of the works that wisdom has adorned—becomes many strengths and many powers.[78]

This process is one of illumination: the Light, while it remains incomprehensible in itself, goes out and infuses itself in creation.[79]

While this is interpreted by Pseudo-Denys and Eriugena in an ontological way, it is generally agreed that Hugh shifts the emphasis to the anthropological, salvationary level.[80] Denys' opening words signify the One Supreme Good rendering itself to the many to be partaken, the one light dividing itself in many rays: 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of all lights' (James 1. 17: *Omne datum optimum, et omne donum perfectum desursum est descendens a Patre luminum*). The *datum optimum*, according to Hugh, who follows Eriugena, refers to the work of nature; the *donum perfectum* to the work of grace.[81] All enlightenment is from the Father, but is at the same time via

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factarum gubernatione participes habere et cooperatores, non ut illorum ipse ministerio juvaretur, sed ut ipsi potestatis ejus consortio sublimes efficerentur' (PL 175, col. 927CD).

[78] *In Hier. coel*. I, 2: 'Haec est creaturae rationalis celsitudo, et sublimitas, et dignitas admiranda, quo dominari meruit in operibus factoris sui, accepta virtute ab ipso, et tenens potestatem cum ipso. Quae virtus, quoniam secundum mensuram largitionis et participationis varie multipliciterque ad decorem ac pulchritudinem eorum, quae sapientia ornavit operum, ab una virtute et potestate una distribuitur, multae virtutes et potestates multae efficiuntur' (PL 175, col. 930A).

[79] *In Hier. coel.* I, 5: 'et videtur in eis lux lucens et illuminans, quae incomprehensibilis et inaccessibilis in se manet. Et propter hoc, ut videri possit, exit in ipsa, et infundit se illis, ut apprehendant eam' (PL 175, col. 932D).

[80] See Roger Baron, *Études sur Hugues de Saint-Victor* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1963), Chapter 6; Karfíková, *"De esse ad pulchrum esse"*, Chapter 4. See also René Roques, 'Connaissance de Dieu et théologie symbolique d'après l'"In Hierarchiam Coelestem Sancti Dionysii" de Hugues de Saint-Victor', in René Roques, *Structures théologiques de la Gnose à Richard de Saint-Victor: essais et analyses critiques* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1962), pp. 295–364. Roques says that Hugh 'infléchit la pensée du Pseudo-Denys dans un sens moins intellectualiste et plus moralisant' (p. 308), and accuses Hugh of an 'infidélité manifeste à l'inspiration profonde de Denys' (p. 312). On *conversio* in this context see also Javelet, *Image et ressemblance*, I, p. 109: 'La conversion n'est pas une simple attitude psychologique. Nous sommes ici en pleine ontologie'; p. 144: in Hugh 'conversion' refers not only to a 'participation existentielle' but also to the Augustinian 'participation convertible'.

[81] *In Hier. coel*. II, 1: 'Data optima dona naturae sunt: dona perfecta dona gratiae' (PL 175, col. 936A).

the mediation of Jesus, indicating that illumination is due to grace, not to nature.[82] Hugh had begun his commentary by explaining why pagan philosophy fails in its search for wisdom. The worldly philosophers consider the outer appearance of this world (*species huius mundi*) but they hold in contempt the humanity of the Word (*humanitas Verbi*).[83] Hugh introduces his idea of two sorts of signs, *simulacra*, in the world: the signs of *natura*, containing the work of creation, and the signs of *gratia*, which refer to Christ's incarnation. The signs of nature only point to the creator, the signs of grace show the presence of God.[84] At the same time as they are distinguished Hugh telescopes nature and grace into each other. Within the Dionysian framework of procession and return, *egressio* and *reditus*, he presents *conditio* and *reparatio*, creation and restoration, as conditioning each other, implying man's separation from his origin. Denys had continued his opening as follows: 'But also each procession of the manifestation of lights, thanks to the movement of the Father (*moto patre*), restoring us as a unifying force, refills us and converts us towards the unity of the Father who gathers us, and to the deific simplicity.'[85] Hugh explains, in a language full of the vocabulary of forming and reforming, of which the following translation only partially conveys the poetical character, that this movement does not in any way diminish the Father, but it does connect man to his origin:

> Every procession, that is, of the manifestation of lights coming forth in us, performs this, clearly, that it fills us, not, certainly, becoming other than itself from that it fills us. It repairs (*restituens*) by restoring, just as it constituted (*constituit*) by creating. It repairs, that is, as a unifying force, which gathers what has been scattered, it puts together what was turned away, and makes the many into one, and thus restoring and reforming converts (*convertit*) us, who first by unlikeness were turned away (*aversi*), by multitude were diverse (*diversi*), by deformity were perverse (*perversi*). It converts, I say, to the unity of the Father who congregates, and to deific simplicity. The light of the Father, invisible in himself, proceeding in us, and going out to become manifest, finds us empty, and void of the true good; and pouring itself out in us refills us according to the virtue and capacity of each of us; and when it has refilled us, it

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[82] *In Hier. coel.* II, 1: 'Omnis quidem illuminatio a Patre est, sed sine Jesu mediatore nulla illuminatio haberi potest' (PL 175, col. 939A).

[83] *In Hier. coel.* I, 1 (PL 175, col. 926BC). For a similar view of pagan philosophers see *Homiliae in Ecclesiasten* X (PL 175, cols 177A–178C).

[84] *In Hier. coel.* I, 1: 'Per simulacra igitur naturae, Creator tantum significabatur; in simulacris vero gratiae praesens Deus ostendebatur' (PL 175, col. 926D).

[85] *In Hier. coel.* II, 1: 'Sed et omnis Patre moto, manifestationis luminum processio in nos optime, et large proveniens, iterum ut unifica virtus restituens nos replet, et convertit ad congregantis Patris unitatem, et deificam simplicitatem' (PL 175, col. 937C).

converts us, that we are not dissimilar from the Father, but look to him in the same likeness and image, by which we are not different from him.[86]

How much this process is connected with knowledge becomes clear when Hugh discusses its reversal. If the divine light proceeds from one level to the next towards man, man, in an epistemological process, has to return by the same stages—that is, from the visible to the invisible. In endless variations Hugh, following his text, explains this process of multiplication and return to oneness:

> Here he [sc. Dionysius] informs us clearly by which stages the procession of divine illumination comes to us; and again by which stages our mind is brought back to the contemplation of the highest brightness. For the divine light first descends to the angelic nature, and from there by divine revelations and showings and by the mystical narration of Holy Scripture it pours itself into our understanding and participation. The human mind, ascending back by the same levels to the highest things, examines the heavenly secrets by sacred inspection of divine speech and that illumination of the divine brightness which the angels have; from there, it slowly grows in the knowledge of the invisible and regains strength finally to contemplate the splendour of the highest light; and it happens, as was said in the beginning, that one light divides itself to illuminate the many, so as to reform all illuminated things to the appearance and likeness of the one brightness.[87]

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[86] *In Hier. coel*. II: 'Omnis scilicet ista processio manifestationis luminum in nos proveniens hoc operatur, videlicet quod replet nos, non utique alio quam seipsa ex eo quod replet, iterum restituens reparando, sicut poenis (*sic*) constituit creando, restituit scilicet utpote unifica virtus, quae dispersa colligit; diversa componit, et ex multis unum facit, et ita restituens, et reformans convertit nos, qui prius dissimilitudine fuimus aversi, multitudine diversi, pravitate perversi. Convertit dico ad congregantis Patris unitatem, et deificam simplicitatem. Lux enim Patris invisibilis in se, procedens in nos, et exiens ad manifestationem vacuos invenit, et inanes a vero bono; et infundens se nobis replet nos secundum uniuscujusque nostrum virtutem et capacitatem; et cum repleverit, convertit nos, ut non dissideamus a Patre, sed in eadem similitudine et imagine respiciamus ad ipsum, qua non discordamus ab ipso' (PL 175, cols 937D–938A). There is more emphasis here on man's moral position than in Eriugena: compare Iohannis Scotus Eriugena: 'omnis processio diuine illuminationis que, ineffabili paterno motu, in nos copiosissime et multipliciter prouenit, iterum ipsa congruenter, dum sit uirtus nos unificans atque restituens, sua gratia implet et conuertit ad ipsum Patrem, qui ad se congregat que a se procedunt et in se unificat diuersa et deificat sibi conformia et simplificat ueluti in infinitam numerositatem multiplicata', in *Expositiones in Ierarchiam Coelestem* I, ed. by J. Barbet, CCCM 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975), p. 5, ll. 156–162.

[87] *In Hier. coel*. II: 'Hic manifeste edocet quibus gradibus divinae illuminationis processio fiat usque ad nos; et rursum quibus progressionibus mens nostra reducatur ad summae claritatis contemplationem. Divinum enim lumen primum in angelicam naturam descendit, et ab ipsa revelationibus, et demonstrationibus divinis, et mystica sacri eloquii narratione ad nostram usque intelligentiam, participationemque se transfundit. Mens vero humana eisdem rursum gradibus ad superna conscendens, sacra divini eloquii inspectione coelestia secreta, et

The process is thus presented as the return of man to his origin. Dispersion and dissimilitude indicate man's alienated condition. Man needs the multiple doctrine of divine scripture, so that his mind, alienated from God, is brought back to the knowledge of the truth, and that which has been dispersed through diverse things, will be collected into one again. The character of this dispersion, in man's thinking, is a central point in the works of Hugh which I shall discuss in the last part of this chapter. In his Commentary the process is perfected in man's seeing the light of the Father, and the effusion of light and its concentration seem to become one movement: 'Seeing the light of the Father we are restored, that is we are reformed again, that is we are brought back and converted to that simple ray of his where we came from, we who shine from one light.'[88]

Where in Pseudo-Denys and Eriugena the focus is on the process from unity to multiplicity, Hugh concentrates on the dual *simulacra* of nature and grace,[89] the latter subsuming the former. This enables him to see multiplicity and diversity not only as a loss of unity, but in a more positive way as well:

> This multiplication and variation is the beauty of the whole; because, unless single things were beautiful in different ways, all things together would not be beautiful in the highest degree. For not one thing out of all the diverse things could contain what was the whole of beauty: and thus the uppermost beauty has been distributed by diverse participation in the individual things, that it could be perfect simultaneously in all.[90]

As Hugh emphasizes several times, each receives according to capacity and *proportionaliter*.[91]

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eam quae in angelis est, divinae claritatis illuminationem perpendit: ex qua paulatim in invisibilium agnitionem succrescens ad ipsum tandem summi luminis splendorem contemplandum convalescit; et fit, quod in principio dictum est, quia unum lumen et ad multa illuminanda se dividit, ut illuminata omnia ad unius claritatis aspectum similitudinemque reformet' (PL 175, cols 941D–942A).

[88] *In Hier. coel*. II: 'Respicientes enim claritatem Patris restituimur, id est reformamur iterum, hoc est reductive conversi ad illud, unde venimus, in simplum ejus radium, ut in uno lumine unum simus, qui lucemus ex lumine uno' (PL 175, col. 942BC).

[89] Baron, *Études sur Hugues de Saint-Victor*, p. 181.

[90] *In Hier. coel*. II: 'Haec vero multiplicatio et variatio universorum est pulchritudo; quoniam, nisi dissimiliter pulchra essent singula, summe pulchra non essent simul universa. Non enim unum aliquod ex universis diversis capere potuit, quod erat pulchritudinis totum: et idcirco summa pulchritudo varia participatione distributa est in singulis, ut perfecta esse posset simul in universis' (PL 175, cols 943D–944A). On this passage and the difference between Eriugena and Hugh, see Edgar De Bruyne, *Études d'esthétique médiévale*, 3 vols, Werken uitgegeven door de Faculteit van de Wijsbegeerte en Letteren, 97–99 (Bruges: 'De Tempel', 1946), III, 212 (and, on Hugh's esthetics the whole chapter, pp. 203–254).

[91] See, for example, *In Hier. coel*. II, PL 175, cols 944A; 945A; 947A.

If man's return is a question of knowledge, it is knowledge in the broad sense of the *Didascalicon* and the *Institutio novitiorum*, implying man's way of life. This becomes clear in Hugh's treatment of the *materialis manuductio*, the guiding by visible, material signs. Materially taking by hand (*manuductio*) is to be understood as 'the corporeal signs, which the human mind uses as a *manuductio*, that it is directed by the visible to the imitation and contemplation of the invisible. To imitation by the practice of virtue, to contemplation by knowledge of truth.'[92] Elsewhere Hugh combines *cognitio* which leads to *scientia* on the one hand, *cognitio* which shows the *forma* of good morals and the habit of virtue on the other hand, as the object of illumination and perfection respectively.[93] Good works contribute to understanding where knowledge in a narrow sense fails. Man only achieves perfection if what he cannot know by understanding, he apprehends by the pursuit of good works.[94] Hugh's theme in *De institutione novitiorum* resonates here in this text. As far as man shares in the world of the visible, the reverse side of this is that the disposition of the outer man and his way of life and his acts show the form and habit of the inner man.[95]

Corresponding to the beauty of the visible things is their function as signs of the invisible. Ultimately this is the result of how God conforms himself to man, in the double *conditio* and *dispositio* of the visible, a conformation which has its apogee in the incarnation: 'He has conformed himself to what is ours, so that by what is ours he would become known to us'.[96]

Thus, the capacity of visible things to signify the invisible is part of a divine disposition.[97] It is based on a similarity between the beauty of the visible, even if that beauty varies according to its forms, and the beauty of the invisible, which inheres

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[92] *In Hier. coel.*: 'Materialem autem manuductionem corporalia signa intelligit, quorum quasi manuductione mens humana utitur, ut ex visibilibus ad invisibilium imitationem et contemplationem dirigatur. Ad imitationem quidem per exercitium virtutis; ad contemplationem vero per cognitionem veritatis' (PL 175, col. 948A). On this passage see Karfíková, *"De esse ad pulchrum esse"*, p. 218.

[93] *In Hier. coel.* VII (PL 175, col. 1061AB).

[94] *In Hier. coel.* IV: 'hoc solum hominem ad perfectum ducit, quando bona quae per intelligentiam cognoscere non potuit, per studium boni operis apprehendit' (PL 175, col. 1001C).

[95] *In Hier. coel.* II: 'Sed et in unoquoque nostrum exterioris hominis dispositio, et ordo vivendi, atque agendi modus interioris hominis formam habitumque demonstrat' (PL 175, col. 951AB).

[96] *In Hier. coel.* II: 'Conformat se nostris ut per nostra innotescat nobis' (PL 175, col. 946C).

[97] *In Hier. coel.* II: 'quoniam et ipsa visibilia a Deo sic facta sunt, ut secundum illam similitudinem et aemulationem, quam ad ipsa invisibilia acceperunt, eadem convenienter declarare possunt, ut noster animus horum ductione utens ad illa dirigatur secundum ista, pro similitudine demonstrationis illa aestimans et perpendens' (PL 175, col. 948C).

simply and without change in the essence of the invisible. This similarity enables the mind to go from the beauty of visible things to the beauty of invisible things. As will become apparent in other works by Hugh, the positive value of the world adds to the tension between the need to leave the world behind and the sign-character of the visible world: a tension which, combined with the limits of signs and human capacities of expression, is reflected in the texts.

The closest connection between the visible and the invisible, and the very point at which one turns into the other, is found in man himself. The most eloquent expression of this connection can be seen in the parallels between the bodily and the spiritual senses, as Hugh explains:

> For according to the invisible light inborn in itself, our mind, looking at the invisible, easily judges that visible forms, which by some kind likeness correspond to that which it has invisibly inside itself, are images of invisible beauty; it finds them by its approval and feeling of affection. For what is in the mind is invisible, just as the mind itself is invisible; and nevertheless that very mind, which itself is invisible, conceives joy and love and affection from the things that are visible; and because of these it loves some things as if they were similar, as friend and kindred, and it gives itself to them voluntarily and rejoices in them. Other things, however, it rejects, and hates, and avoids, and it keeps itself far away from them in its affection and love; and it declares them alien to itself, and disagreeing, and not having any likeness with itself. And in this way our mind learns from its own nature that the visible has a relation and a likeness to the invisible […]. Here it is the outer appearance and form which delights the sight; it is the pleasantness of the melody which caresses the hearing; it is the sweetness of odour which refreshes smelling; it is the sweetness of flavour which imparts itself to taste; it is the smoothness of bodies which fondles and soothingly welcomes touch. There, however, the outer appearance is virtue, and the form justice, sweetness is love, and odour desire; song really is joy and exultation; touching is the finding of the beloved good that is desired and sought.[98]

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[98] *In Hier. coel*. II: 'Nam secundum invisibilem lucem insitam sibi noster animus ad invisibilia respiciens, facile arbitratur visibiles formas invisibilis pulchritudinis imagines esse, illi, quod invisibile intus ipse habet, amica quadam similitudine respondentes, eas secundum approbationem et affectum inveniens. Quod enim in animo est, invisibile est, sicut ipse animus invisibilis est; et concipit tamen ipse, qui invisibilis est ex iis quae visibilia sunt, gaudium, et amorem, et affectum; et diligit ex his quaedam quasi similia, et amica, et cognata et praestat se illis voluntarie, et exsultat in ipsis. Alia autem aspernatur, et odit et refugit, et longe se facit ab illis, amore, et dilectione; et judicat peregrina a se, et disconvenientia, et nullam secum habentia similitudinem. Atque in hunc modum noster animus ex propria natura docetur quod visibilia ad invisibilia cognationem habent et similitudinem […]. Est enim hic species et forma, quae delectat visum; est et melodiae jucunditas, quae demulcet auditum; est suavitas odoris, quae reficit olfactum; est dulcedo saporis, quae infundit gustum; et lenitas corporum, quae fovet et blande excipit tactum. Illic autem species est virtus, et forma justitia, dulcedo amor, et odor desiderium; cantus vero gaudium et exsultatio; contactus autem amati, et desiderati, et quaesiti boni inventio' (PL 175, cols 949D–950B). On the origin of the

Man is thus the site where the visible and the invisible meet, and man's self-knowledge is woven into the process of interpretation of the visible world.

Both nature and scripture offer the external forms of the visible world, which are images of the invisible and have to be interpreted as such.[99] Interpretation was already connected with a double way of divine revelation in scripture, when Hugh commented on the distinction between symbol and *anagoge*: sometimes the invisible is shown through signs similar to sensible things, sometimes solely by *anagoge*, literally, uplifting. From these two modes of revelation it follows that scripture has two sorts of descriptions: the symbolic, where the truth of hidden things is adumbrated by forms and figures and similitudes; and the anagogical, where it is expressed naked and pure as it is, without a covering. Later Hugh, following Pseudo-Denys, will add that the *figurae* which belong to the symbolic mode are more clearly demonstrating the truth, because, by the unlikeness of the comparison, they give away their nature as mere *figura*, preventing us from remaining fixed in the visible similitude itself.

In this context Hugh digresses to meditate on divine incomprehensibility.[100] The character of human knowledge excludes any possibility of knowing God: the human heart can only grasp what it can think, and it can only think about either those things which it can physically see, or those which it can perceive by imagination or by experience and truth. God is beyond that, and the difference between the lowest and the highest created beings is nothing compared with the difference between a created being and God. The difference between body and spirit, enormous as it may be, is nothing compared with the difference between spirit and God, and, Hugh says, we have not even started to see how far these images are from the truth. Hugh stretches the language of ineffability beyond itself, while at the same time pointing to the sovereign power which reigns over the boundaries of language:

> And yet, because it cannot be said otherwise, this is said; so that not nothing is said, where something has to be said, and it cannot be said what it is; or, if it can be said, it cannot be understood. This thus is said, and truth tolerates this about itself, and recommends this as truth to us, who are not yet able to grasp truth itself, until the

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spiritual senses in Origen and Gregory of Nyssa see Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 67–70, 93–94; and see also Karl Rahner, 'Le début d'une doctrine des cinq sens spirituels chez Origène', *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique*, 13 (1932), 113–145. Although Eriugena comments on the spiritual sense of *odor* (*Expositiones* I, Barbet, p. 15, ll. 519–531), Hugh's elaboration of self-knowledge is his own.

[99] *In Hier. coel.* II: 'Ex his enim noster animus ad illorum cognitionem et imitationem ascendit, arbitrans visibiles formas, quas vel natura secundum primam conditionem inditas ostendit, vel sacrum eloquium dispensatorie ad declarationem faciendam in significationem proponit, invisibilis pulchritudinis imagines esse' (PL 175, 950B).

[100] *In Hier. coel.* III (PL 175, cols 975A–978C). On this passage see Karfíková, '*"De esse ad pulchrum esse"*', p. 251.

figura passes, and truth is manifested, above all this and beyond all this, bare and open as it is itself.[101]

God's ineffability is thus circumvented by the use of *figurae*, and the more efficient they are in doing their job as images, the more unfitting they seem. The first angelic hierarchies confront the commentators with almost the same problems of inexpressibility, as when Pseudo-Denys explains the name of the seraphim as *calefacientes*, 'the warm-makers'. This name (according to Pseudo-Denys in a sequence where the words seem to stumble over each other) teaches

> their perennial and incessant movement around the divine things, and the warm and penetrating and overglowing of an intent, and maybe inner and always bending movement, drawing back the things under them, acting on them by their own example, warming them again as it were, reviving them in a similar warmth [...].[102]

When Hugh comments on this ongoing incantatory utterance, what he seems to do is to slowly bring these words from the unutterable into the domain of human capacities, if not immediately of understanding, at least of wonder and admiration: 'If I say what I think, first I must confess that I have heard words either not said to a man, or not said by a man.'[103] What he has heard seems to be beyond man, coming from the third heaven—Hugh hints at the apostle Paul, Denys' teacher according to tradition, and his ascent:

> Maybe those words are born from words that can be heard but must not be said. For he, who suggested or taught these words, attained the third heaven, and entered paradise, and there heard some words of God from the Word, totally secret, and nearest to silence, where the human ear does not reach, which nobody would hear until he knew. They were heard inside where they were said, and could not go out to where man is. Therefore they could be heard inside by him who was very much inside, but they must not be said to those who were outside. But so as not to abandon those who are outside, if they were not called by him who was inside, words were born from

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[101] *In Hier. coel.* III: 'Et tamen, quia aliud dici non potest, hoc dicitur; ne nihil dicatur, ubi aliud dicendum est, et dici non potest quod est; vel si dici potest, intelligi non potest. Hoc ergo dicitur, et tolerat hoc veritas de se, et commendat hoc nobis pro veritate, qui ipsam adhuc veritatem capere non possumus, donec transeat figura, et veritas manifestetur, super omne hoc, et extra omne hoc, nude et aperte ut est ipsa' (PL 175, col. 978A). For Hugh's critique of Eriugena's position on God's ultimate unknowability, see Châtillon, 'Hugues de Saint-Victor: critique de Jean Scot'.

[102] *In Hier. coel.* VI: '"Mobile enim semper eorum circa divina, et incessabile, et calidum, et acutum, et superfervidum, intentae, et forsan intimae, et inflexibilis semper, motionis et suppositorum reductivae, et activae exemplativum tanquam recalificans illa, et resuscitans in similem caliditatem"' (PL 175, col. 1035D).

[103] *In Hier. coel.* VI: 'Si ego quod sentio dicam, primum hoc fateor, quod verba audivi aut non homini dicta, aut non dicta ab homine. Nam et per hominem ea dici tam magnum mihi videtur, ut nihil amplius homini dari possit' (PL 175, col. 1036A).

words, just as words were born from the Word: from words that should be kept inside, words that could be pronounced outside; great words from the boundless, obscure words from the hidden, deep words from the impenetrable, heard by us, but whether understood by us I do not know.[104]

If we cannot understand these words, as Hugh continues his effort to retrieve them from the inaccessible, at least we can admire them, and maybe by our admiration we will reach illumination:

> And then those sweet words will be not only admirable, but also lovable, when they start to be heard and known, if only we are willing towards them. If they are not loved they cannot be understood, and they are not loved if they are not tasted. What then? By what means have we heard the words if we do not understand; or how do we understand if we do not love? I for my part answer this: even if I do not trust my love, I do not depart from admiration. Maybe by that very admiration I will wake up to knowledge; and if I am less roused to knowledge, I shall be stimulated to love. And in the meantime that love will be my refreshment, until from it will come forth contemplation, by which may come illumination.[105]

The words of Paul's disciple Denys about the seraphim are finally brought down to human understanding when they are enfolded in the evocation of biblical persons and texts. In what follows, Hugh's readers would immediately recognize the disciple John, or the disciples on their way to Emmaus, or, of course, the bride from the Canticle, although Hugh does not explicitly mention them. By delicate allusion Hugh carefully approaches and provides access to the ineffable powers behind Denys' words—which all refer to love, *dilectio*—as if what he wants to say would vanish by more directness. Thus the 'moving' and 'incessant' refer to love as life:

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[104] *In Hier. coel*. VI: 'Nam ille quidem, qui haec suggerebat, vel docebat, usque ad tertium coelum pervenerat, et intraverat in paradisum, Dei ibique verba quaedam de verbo audierat secreta omnino, et proxima silentio, usque ad quae auris humana non contingeret: quae nemo audiret, donec sciret. Intus enim audiebantur ubi dicebantur, et non poterant exire foras ubi erat homo. Propterea ab eo qui intus erat, et valde intus, intus et introrsum audiri potuerunt; sed iis, qui foris erant, dici non debuerunt. Ne tamen vel illi, qui foris erant, derelinquerentur, si ab eo, qui intus erat, non vocarentur: nata sunt de verbis verba, sicut verba de verbo nata fuerunt: de verbis, quae intus servari debuerunt, verba quae foras proferri potuerunt: de immensis magna, de occultis obscura, de impenetrabilibus profunda, quae a nobis audita sunt utrum intellecta, nescio' (PL 175, col. 1036AB).

[105] *In Hier. coel*. VI: 'Et erunt tunc verba ipsa dulcia non solum miranda, sed amanda, cum coeperint audiri et sciri, si tamen ad ipsa gratiosi fuerimus. Si enim non diliguntur, non intelliguntur; neque amantur, si non gustantur. Quid ergo? Quare audivimus, si non intelligimus; aut quomodo intelligimus, si non diligimus? Ego pro mea parte respondeo: Si non praesumo de dilectione, non discedo ab admiratione. Forsitan ipsa admiratione evigilabo ad cognitionem: et si minus excitor ad cognitionem, incitabor ad dilectionem. Et erit interim dilectio ipsa refectio, donec ex ea oriatur contemplatio, per quam fiat illuminatio' (PL 175, col. 1036CD).

'Listen to that beloved, the lover who recommended love. "Whoever does not love", he says, "abides in death" (1 John 2. 14).'[106] Evanescence itself is at the centre of the story of the men of Emmaus to which Hugh alludes next:

> And what about affection? Where can we show the warm and burning quality in love? Where does love have fervour and warmth, or rather where is love without warmth and fervour? They walked and loved, burning and glowing, and they said: about Jesus (compare Luke 24. 19), while they heard him—and did not recognize him on the way? For they were walking and moving, driven through the impatience of love, because if they stood still, they did not love. The moving of love is just as its warmth, so that true love does not grow torpid. Thus they walked in the movement of love, and were burning in warmth, and said: Did not our heart burn inside us for Jesus, while he talked with us by the way? (Luke 24. 32). […] They may have been slow at understanding, but they were not tepid, or lazy at loving. Thus because first they loved, they later came to know […].[107]

Just as Jesus appeared before vanishing again, the story about the men of Emmaus recedes when the voice of the bride of the Canticle is added to the voices of the men of Emmaus and of the disciple whom Jesus loved, bringing the words about the seraphim, the keenness (*acutum*) of love—also called the fluid (*liquidum*) of love— ever closer to the 'you' of the reader to whom Hugh returns:

> And I think it was the bride herself who spoke; and nothing hard or harsh should be brought forward to her, trembling and timid. Therefore it is called fluid—for keen—in the faltering of love. Because the liquid penetrates just as the keen, and does not give up until it penetrates in the inner. Therefore she says: my soul is melting (*liquefacta*), as my beloved has spoken: I sought him (Canticle 5. 6). She sought him, because she was melting towards him. If she was not melting towards him, she would not run after him, but she would remain hard, and not enter. Now, however, she has melted, and started to run; but she does not find him immediately, till at length she arrives. Therefore here as well it is necessary to be incessant, that she enters and penetrates and says: I hold him, and do not let him go, until I bring him, she says, in the house of

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[106] *In Hier. coel*. VI: '"Mobile, inquit, et incessabile, et calidum, et acutum, et superfervidum." Mobile, quia vita; incessabile, quia perpetua; calidum, quia amor; acutum, quia sapientia. […] Vis scire, quod dilectio vita est? Audi dilectum illum, et dilectorem dilectionem commendantem. "Qui non diligit, inquit, manet in morte"' (PL 175, col. 1037A).

[107] *In Hier. coel*. VI: 'Et quid amor? Ubi calidum illud, et fervidum ostendere poterimus in dilectionem? Ubi fervorem, et calorem amor habuit; vel potius, ubi amor sine calore, et fervore fuit? Ambulantes et amantes, incendentes et ferventes, qui dixerunt de Jesu, quem audierunt, et non cognoverunt in via? Ambulabant enim et movebantur, impatientia dilectionis acti, quia si starent non amarent. Mobile enim amoris est sicut et calidum, ut non torpescat dilectio vera. Ambulabant ergo in mobili amoris, et ardebant in calido, et dicebant: "Nonne cor nostrum ardens erat in nobis de Jesu, dum loqueretur nobis in via?" Quia enim ambulabant, mobile habebant; et calidum, quia ardebant; acutum autem non habebant, quia non cognoscebant. […] Ergo hebetes fuerunt, et tardi ad cognoscendum; sed non tepidi, aut pigri ad diligendum. Quia tamen prius dilexerunt postea cognoverunt' (PL 175, col. 1037BC).

my mother, into the chamber of her who has borne me (Canticle 3. 4). I shall bring him, she says, in the house of my mother, and in the chamber of her who has borne me. Thus he himself will enter, so that you advance into him. For then you enter into him, when he himself advances to you. When love of him enters your heart, and penetrates it, and his love attains the innermost of your heart, then he himself enters in you, and you also enter in yourself, so as to advance to him. Thus introduce him to you yourself.[108]

Through this exegesis the reader is intimately enveloped in the movement of even the highest hierarchies, even when Hugh returns to the seraphim and their power of purifying and converting what is below them.

Throughout the Commentary this *conversio* is seen, at some level at least, as the last step in a process which brings creation to its perfection, underlying its very subsistence and bringing it into order, making it participate in divine goodness, which recalls to itself the things that it has made, according to their different capacities.[109] This diversity in capacity at the same time contributes to the beauty of the whole:

For in this the beauty of the universe is perfected, that all things are called back to divine participation not all in one and the same way, but each according to its rank and grade in a varied way in many places, that in the very fact that they are not deserted,

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[108] *In Hier. coel*. VI: 'sicut et liquidum in alio quodam loco acutum nominatur dilectionis. Et puto quod sponsa erat ipsa, quae loquebatur; et non oportebat durum aliquid aut asperum paventi et timidae adduci. Idcirco liquidum nominatum est pro acuto in blandimento dilectionis. Nam et ipsum liquidum penetrat sicut acutum, et non cessat donec ad interiora pervenerit. Idcirco ait: "Anima mea liquefacta est, ut dilectus locutus est; quaesivi illum." Propterea enim quaesivit illum, quia liquefacta est ad illum. Nisi enim liquefieret ad illum, non curreret post illum; sed dura staret, et non intraret. Nunc autem liquefacta est, et currere coepit; sed nondum statim invenit, donec pervenit. Idcirco et hic quoque incessabile necessarium erat, ut intraret, et penetraret et diceret: "Tenui illum, nec dimittam, donec introducam, inquit, eum in domum matris meae, et in cubiculum genetricis meae. Introducam, inquit, eum in domum matris meae, in cubiculum genitricis meae." Ergo ipse intrabit, ut tu ingrediaris ad ipsum. Tunc enim tu intras ad ipsum, quando ipse ad te ingreditur. Quando amor illius cor tuum intrat, et penetrat, et ad intimum cordis tui dilectio illius pertingit; tunc intrat in te ipse, et tu quoque intras teipsum, ut ingrediaris ad ipsum. Igitur tu ipsum ad te introducito' (PL 175, col. 1038A–C).

[109] *In Hier. coel*. V: 'Propter hoc divina bonitas ea, quae creavit, ad se revocat et reformat, quia proprium illi est ex insita benignitate illa, quae esse acceperunt ab ea, ut beate esse possint, ad suam communionem vocare; quantum scilicet unumquodque secundum ordinem conditionis suae, et modum capax esse potest participationis illius […] Quandoquidem, inquit, hoc proprium est divinae bonitatis, ut omnia revocet ad sui participationem, ut conversa ad eam subsistant, quae ab ea processerunt, ut esse acciperent (PL 175, cols 1007A–1007C).

the work of goodness is fulfilled; in that they are ordered variously to the grace and beauty of all, the work of wisdom is accomplished.[110]

In this perspective the emphasis on grace is more an aspect of man's existence than primarily a response made necessary by the Fall. There is a hint here of the inherent fragility of existence and, at the same time, that divine providence guarantees its being: 'All things that are, if they had not received their beginning from divine goodness, would not have begun; and if they did not have their essence in that goodness, they would not remain in being.'[111] Only between the lines is fragility associated with corruption. While the divine beatitude of the Creator is pure—that is, it does not have any dissimilitude—corruption unexpectedly slips through, contrasting with this purity: 'corruption introduces dissimilitude, and makes something other which withdraws from its being and is wanting so that it is other than it was.'[112] When Hugh discusses Pseudo-Denys' imagery of fire for the Deity— its power to move itself, to diffuse itself and its renovating power—renovation is also linked, in a small but significant addition by Hugh, to the tendency towards nothingness: fire 'is renovating everything, because it renews what is growing old, that it may not completely cease, and turn into nothing', *ne omnino deficiunt et in nihilum eant*.[113] In the devotional commentaries of *In Ecclesiasten* and *De vanitate*, to which I will turn later in this chapter, this fragility forms a running thread as part of the human condition. In a different way it also informs Hugh's magnum opus, *De sacramentis*, to which I now turn.

The World and the Soul

While in *In Hierarchiam coelestem* man's position in the world is explored from within a cosmological perspective, in *De sacramentis* Hugh examines man's plight from the historical point of view. The relation between nature and grace, and man's state within both, is one of the leading themes in *De sacramentis*. Nature, the *opus*

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[110] *In Hier. coel.* V: 'Nam in hoc ipso pulchritudo universitatis perficitur, quod non uno et eodem modo omnia, sed singula quaeque secundum ordinem et gradum suum varie, ac multifariam ad communionem divinae bonitatis revocantur, ut in eo quod non deseruntur, compleatur opus bonitatis; in eo vero, quod varie disponuntur ad decorem et pulchritudinem omnium opus sapientiae perficiatur' (PL 175, col. 1007BC).

[111] *In Hier. coel.* V: 'Omnia enim, quae sunt, nisi a divina bonitate principium accepissent, non incoepissent; et nisi in illa essentiam haberent, in eo quod sunt, non permanerent' (PL 175, cols 1007D–1008A).

[112] *In Hier. coel.* IV: 'Corruptio enim dissimilitudinem inducit, et alterum facit quod a suo esse recedit, et deficit ut si alterum quam fuit' (PL 175, col. 999A).

[113] *In Hier. coel.* X (PL 175, col. 1141A). See Weisweiler, 'Die Ps.-Dionysiuskommentare', p. 32.

conditionis, and grace, the *opus restaurationis*, inform each other once again in history as it unfolds, and man's predicament in the world is defined in more detail. While the notion of *conversio*, retaining its neo-Platonic sense, resonates more clearly than in *In Hierarchiam coelestem* with the Fall and Redemption, man's fall, in fact, turns out to be more complicated than a dilemma of *conversio* and its opposite, *aversio* (or of obedience and disobedience) might suggest.

Hugh's *De sacramentis* is usually seen as a (proto-)summa of theology. As such it is somewhat unsatisfactory, as its conceptual system lacks the clarity that was later achieved by Peter the Lombard (who was Hugh's pupil for some time).[114] Compensating for this lack of system (and conferring coherence on another level) is Hugh's pedagogical view of creation and salvation history. Even in this summa, which foreshadows the great work by the Lombard, one can discern the idea of forming the person. The *doctrina* contained in it is one of the means which Hugh had recommended in his *Institutio novitiorum*, to achieve knowledge of the right way of living.

Within this *doctrina* Hugh offers a *narratio*, or story, where a drama unfolds. In the following discussion of *De sacramentis* I shall concentrate on the dramatic potential of the work rather than on its quality as theological doctrine, because in its often dramatic presentation *De sacramentis* could be seen as a *Bildungsroman*, comparable to the cosmologies of the Chartres Platonists and to other twelfth-century works such as the poems by Alain of Lille, 'where the literary form of the poem is designed to bring its readers to an ideal form'.[115] As in *In Hierarchiam coelestem*, *De sacramentis* contains words like 'inform' and 'conform' occur on numerous occasions. In this way, *De sacramentis* is not only a *doctrina* in the sense of containing Christian dogma. If, according to Baron, its narrative can be seen as 'the itinerary, not of the soul, but of humankind',[116] one might add that this itinerary of humankind contains the image of the itinerary of the soul. In his exposition of the history of salvation as it unfolds since the very beginning, Hugh incorporates the process by which the reader can not only follow the story of the macrocosm, but at the same time can read the microcosm of his own self into being—comparable to the process of building an inner ark, as he will explain in other works. Following Hugh

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[114] For the place of *De sacramentis* within the context of twelfth-century theological literature, see Marcia L. Colish, *Peter Lombard*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1994) I, 57–65. See also Berndt, 'Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Exegese und Theologie'. For the following discussion of *De sacramentis* see also my 'De wereld en de ziel. Tropologie in Hugo van Sint-Victor's *De sacramentis*', *Bijdragen, tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie*, 58 (1997), 56–78.

[115] Compare James Simpson, *Sciences and the Self in Medieval Poetry: Alan of Lille's Anticlaudianus and John Gower's Confessio Amantis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 7. For a comparison of Hugh with the Chartres Platonists see Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry*.

[116] Roger Baron, *Science et sagesse chez Hugues de Saint-Victor* (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1957), p. 137.

in his exposition of the world's creation and its tropological meanings, we can also see how he differs from the earlier tradition, as exemplified by Peter Damian's exegesis of the days of creation. Hugh is much more elaborate in his tropology of creation and redemption. In *De sacramentis* he underpins his view of man's intermediate position, which accounts for the ambiguity of life, and gives endless digressions to stir the reader into an awareness of this ambiguity, as the point of departure for attaining the necessary concentration.

As is stated in the prologue (after the instruction about the first, historical level of reading) *De sacramentis* is meant to offer the reader an introduction to the second level, of allegory, which serves as a brief summary, 'that the mind may have something definite to which it may affix and conform its attention (*intentio*), lest it be carried away by various volumes of writings and a diversity of readings without order or direction'.[117] The word 'conform' is important: by bringing his *intentio* in form with the story about creation, fall and reparation, the reader can, in fact, effect the necessary *reparatio*, consisting of knowledge of truth and love of virtue. While the allegorical reading will show him the right content of faith, the tropological reading gives form to (*informat*) good work. As Hugh had explained in the *Institutio* and the *Didascalicon*, both faith and good work, producing *cognitio* and springing forth from and stimulating *dilectio*, will result in a restoration of the image of God in man.

De sacramentis consists of two sections. Book One, in twelve parts, deals first with creation, the *opus conditionis*, then with the Fall, and finally begins the story of restoration, the *opus restaurationis*. This, our world, is the stage where, through time, the history of man's remedy unfolds.[118] The first book shows what is at stake, as it states the conditions of man's existence. The main subject of Book Two is the practical elaboration of what is necessitated by this position. In the eighteen parts of this second book Hugh discusses the incarnation of Christ and all the questions related to this incarnation, and then considers the sacraments (in the sense of ecclesiastical sacraments), vices and virtues and their importance, and the end and

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[117] *De sacramentis*, Prologus: 'Hanc enim quasi brevem quamdam summam omnium in unam seriem compegi, ut animus aliquid certum haberet, cui intentionem affigere et conformare valeret, ne per varia Scripturarum volumina et lectionum divortia sine ordine et directione raperetur' (PL 176, cols 183–184; trans. Deferrari, p. 3). In the following, for the direct quotations from *De sacramentis* I give the translation by Deferrari.

[118] *De sacramentis* I, VIII, 1: 'Tria ergo hic in reparatione hominis primo loco consideranda occurrunt: tempus, locus, remedium. Tempus est praesens vita ab initio mundi usque ad finem saeculi. Locus est mundus iste. Remedium in tribus constat: in fide, in sacramentis, in operibus bonis. Tempus longum, ne imparatus praeoccupetur. Locus asper, ut praevaricator castigetur. Remedium efficax, ut infirmus sanetur' (PL 176, cols 305D–306C; trans. Deferrari, p. 142).

renewal of the world.[119] Book Two also contains an explanation of the sacraments which would be useful for priests, but these explanations are not merely technical. They often appeal to the reader directly, in an imaginary dialogue, with the author countering possible questions or objections of the reader, or of other supposed opponents.

Here, I shall concentrate on the story presented in Book One of creation and the Fall, as a *figura* of the reader's itinerary. Man's position in creation and salvation history is repeatedly presented as an 'in between' stage, and this intermediate position determines much of the inner life, allowing recognition of ambivalence from the start, and thus presenting a multi-dimensional view of man.[120] In the same way as, on the cosmic level, any pre-lapsarian state of innocence exhibits a flaw from the very beginning, so the life of individual man is informed by his failings.

Creation and Fall

Hugh begins the introduction to his *De sacramentis* by considering the two 'works' which comprise everything. On the one hand, there is creation—the work of foundation (*opus conditionis*)—and, on the other, the work of restoration (*opus restaurationis*), the incarnation with all its sacraments. Differing from the often lyrical passages of *In Hierarchiam coelestem*, *De sacramentis* strikes a more dramatic, epic tone, when Hugh says that the incarnate word is 'our king, who came in this world to fight with the devil'.[121] The works of restoration are of much more dignity than the works of creation; while these were made to serve man while he was standing, the works of restoration are for his salvation, to raise man once he had fallen. Scripture's subject matter is the *restauratio* and thus it is superior to worldly literature, which, in Hugh's view, is about the *opus conditionis*. As he had explained in his Commentary, worldly literature falls short when it comes to real understanding. The priority of *restauratio* over *conditio*, presupposing a fall which makes this restoration necessary in the first place, is a first indication that *De*

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[119] On the structure of the second part in particular, see Michel T. Girolimon, 'Hugh of St Victor's *De sacramentis Christianae fidei*: The Sacraments of Salvation', *Journal of Religious History*, 18 (1994), 127–138.

[120] On the background of ideas on man as microcosm and his intermediate position see Marie-Thérèse D'Alverny, 'L'Homme comme symbole: le microcosme', in *Simboli e simbologia nell' alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, XXIII (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1976), pp. 123–183; reprinted in Marie-Thérèse D'Alverny, *Études sur le symbolisme de la Sagesse et sur l'iconologie*, ed. by Charles Burnett, preface by Peter Dronke (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1993), IX.

[121] *De sacramentis* I, Prologus 1: 'Verbum enim incarnatum rex noster est, qui in hoc mundum venit cum diabolo pugnaturus' (PL 176, col. 183B; trans. Deferrari, p. 3).

sacramentis is more than a simple story of good and evil or of guilt and innocence. At the end of the first part of Book One, Hugh summarizes his introduction: the *opus conditionis* refers to the creation of all things, in six days; the *opus restaurationis*, wherein the sacrament of redemption was fulfilled or figured, also starts from the beginning of the world, but takes six ages.[122] If the *opus conditionis* is a 'rational work, done gratuitously', the *opus restaurationis* is 'the work of grace, fulfilled rationally'.[123] Thus, from the start, *opus conditionis* and *opus restaurationis* are reflected in each other, excluding an easy presupposition of initial perfection.[124] If, on a theological level, this seems to betray a contradiction, on the tropological level it is this entanglement which confers coherence to the story of creation, as a *figura* of the inner life.[125]

To understand the *restauratio* it is necessary to know about the Fall, and to understand the Fall, one has to know the story of creation. Thus, it is a question of narrative technique, not of priority, to discuss creation first: in this way, 'we might have a more convenient approach' to what really matters.[126] In the same way, the

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[122] *De sacramentis* I, I, 28: 'Ergo opera conditionis sunt quae in principio mundi sex diebus facta sunt; opera vero restaurationis quae a principio mundi propter reparationem hominis sex aetatibus fiunt' (PL 176, col. 204A; trans. Deferrari, p. 26).

[123] *De sacramentis* I, I, 29: 'Ibi quoque cum conderetur gratuito factum opus rationabile; et hic dum redimeretur rationabiliter impletum opus gratiae' (PL 176, col. 204D; trans. Deferrari, p. 27).

[124] Incarnation is 'retro-active'; see Baron, *Etudes sur Hugues de Saint-Victor*, p. 148; Baron, *Science et sagesse*, p. 31: 'La dyade *opus conditionis, opus restaurationis* n'évoque donc pas chez Hugues deux prises de vue séparées, mais plutôt une surimpression.'

[125] On Hugh's supposed inconsistency between his Augustinian-historical and his neo-Platonic cosmological interests, see Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry*, p. 58.

[126] *De sacramentis* I, I, 28: 'ut ad eamdem materiam tractandam quasi ex praecedenti accessum convenientiorem haberemus' (PL 176, col. 203D; trans. Deferrari, p. 26). In lectures given by Hugh before he wrote *De sacramentis* and which have been recorded by his pupil, Laurence, Hugh had followed a more systematic rather than a historical approach and discussed, for example, the incarnation before creation: see H. Weisweiler, 'Die Arbeitsmethode Hugos von St.Viktor. Ein Beitrag zum Entstehen seines Hauptwerkes De Sacramentis', *Scholastik*, 19–24 (1944–1949), 59–87 and 232–267 (p. 258). These lectures, *Sententie de Divinitate*, have been edited by Ambrogio M. Piazzoni, 'Ugo di San Vittore "auctor" delle "Sententie de divinitate"', *Studi medievali*, 3e serie, 23 (1982), 861–955. Thus Hugh's use of the historical order as the structure of his work was a conscious change. Compare *De sacramentis* I, II, 1: 'eo sane ordine loquendo incedentes quem Creator ipse rerum demonstravit operando' (PL 176, col. 205B; trans. Deferrari, p. 28). See also Baron, *Science et sagesse*, p. 137: 'La "series narrationum" est pour lui principe de l'intelligibilité.' For the importance attached by Hugh to the *series narrationis* see M.-D. Chenu, 'Conscience de l'histoire et théologie', in *La Théologie au douzième siècle*, pp. 62–89 (pp. 65–66), translated as 'Theology and the New Awareness of History' in Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society*, pp. 162–201; See also Chenu, 'Nature ou Histoire? Une controverse exégétique sur la

chronological sequence of creation, the fact that man is created after everything else, is in no way a sign of causal priority: man is the *causa* for which everything has been created, as man himself has been created because of God. The chronological sequence, however, contains the key to understanding. That is the reason why Hugh follows scripture and begins with creation. In this way he presents the stage on which humankind, as well as the inner man, will play their role, showing the pedagogical impact of every layer of this stage.

The pedagogical dimension of creation becomes evident from the very beginning. In the first chapters of the first part, Hugh deals with the question 'whether those things that were made came into being simultaneously in matter and in form, or were first created indeed through matter, and afterwards given form'.[127] Augustine had taken the six days of creation as symbolizing the hierarchies of different natures as they exist in the divine mind.[128] Hugh recognizes the difficulties of the subject. He suggests that creation at once of matter for the material world resulted in a form of confusion, *forma confusionis*, and was followed by further ordering in the form of disposition, *forma dispositionis*, realized through the interval of the six days. Hugh supposes that, though God could have proceeded otherwise, he may have observed the *modus* most appropriate to a rational creature, presenting a lesson and example of the distance between being (in the *forma confusionis*) and beautiful being (in the *forma dispositionis*). Rational creatures (that is, at this moment of beginning, the angels), who, in a certain sense, were also made unformed, would thus have an example to follow. Rational beings can bridge the distance and reach beauty and blessedness (*pulchrum esse atque beatum esse*) by turning in love to the creator—by *conversio*.[129] By this turning, the rational being would have conformed to the creator; or, in other words, by conforming, he would have turned to God.

As this account makes clear, with the gap between being and beautiful and blessed being, there is the possibility for things to go wrong—of a turning away from, rather than a turning to God: *aversio* instead of *conversio*. This is exactly what

création au XIIe siécle', *Archives d' histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 28 (1953), 25–30. Compare *Didascalicon* III, 8 (Buttimer, p. 58) about the order to be followed in *lectio*.

[127] *De sacramentis* I, I, 2: 'Sed non parva quaestio est utrum ea quae facta sunt, simul in materia et forma adesse prodierint, an prius per materiam quidem essentialiter condita sint, postmodum formata' (PL 176, col. 187C; trans. Deferrari, p. 8).

[128] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV, 33, ed. by Iosephus Zycha, CSEL 28 (Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1894), pp. 131–133. See Chenu, 'Conscience de l'Histoire', p. 68.

[129] *De sacramentis* I, I, 3 (PL 176, col.189AB; trans. Deferrari, p. 9). This *conversio* as final forming can be found in Augustine: see *De Genesi ad litteram* I, 2: 'an utriusque informis materia dicta est caelum et terra […] non conuersa ad creatorem - tali enim conuersione formatur atque perficitur; si autem non conuertatur, informis est'; and again in I, 3: 'et facta est lux, eam reuocante ad se creatore conuersio eius facta atque inluminata intellegatur' (see Zycha, p. 7, ll. 7–9 and p. 4, ll. 14–17, respectively). The *conversio* of which Hugh wrote in *In Hierachiam coelestem* resonates as well.

happened, as we know. First God created light and separated it from darkness. At the very moment when light was created, and was visibly divided from darkness, 'invisibly also the good angels were separated from those evil angels who were falling into the darkness of sin',[130] so Hugh summarizes the fall of the angels at this point and leaves the difficult questions which can be asked concerning this fall to a later discussion.

In his account of the third day, when the sun was made, Hugh offers an elaborate tropology for the first time. He suggests that after the light created on the first day, the creation of the sun only on the third day means that the confusion of the world in those first days was not worthy of full light, and he connects this with what happens on the level of the inner life:

> I think that here a great sacrament is commended, because every soul, as long as it is in sin, is in a kind of darkness and confusion. But it cannot emerge from its confusion and be disposed to the order and form of justice, unless it be first illumined to see its evils, and to distinguish light from darkness, that is, virtues from vices, so that it may dispose (*disponat*) itself to order and conform (*conformet*) to truth. Thus, therefore, a soul lying in confusion can not do without light, and on this account it is necessary first that light be made, that the soul may see itself, and recognize the horror and shamefulness of its confusion, and extricate itself, and fit (*coaptat*) itself to that rational disposition and order of truth. Now, after all relating to it has been put in order and has been disposed according to the exemplar of reason and the form of wisdom, then straightway will the sun of justice begin to shine for it.[131]

The succeeding events of creation also have their spiritual meaning. After distinguishing between light and darkness as between day and night—between good and evil works—man has to make an inner firmament, to distinguish between the upper and the lower waters of the desires of the flesh and of the spirit:[132]

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[130] *De sacramentis* I, I, 10: 'Et ut mihi videtur eodem prorsus temporis momento quo visibiliter et corporaliter divisa est lux a tenebris; invisibiliter quoque boni angeli discreti sunt a malis illis in tenebras peccati cadentibus: et istis ad lucem justitiae conversis illuminatisque a luce, ut lux essent et non tenebrae' (PL 176, col. 194D; trans. Deferrari, pp. 15–16).

[131] *De sacramentis* I, I, 12: 'Ego puto magnum hic aliquod sacramentum commendari; quia omnis anima quandiu in peccato est, quasi in tenebris est quibusdam et confusione. Sed non potest evadere confusionem suam et ad ordinem justitiae formamque disponi, nisi illuminetur primum videre mala sua, et discernere lucem a tenebris, hoc est virtutes a vitiis, ut se disponat ad ordinem et conformet veritati. Hoc igitur anima in confusione jacens sine luce facere non potest; et propterea necesse est primum ut lux fiat, ut videat semetipsam, et agnoscat horrorem et turpitudinem confusionis suae, et explicet se atque coaptet ad illam rationabilem dispositionem et ordinem veritatis. Postquam autem ordinata fuerint omnia ejus, et secundum exemplar rationis formamque sapientiae disposita, tunc statim incipiet ei lucere sol justitiae' (PL 176, col. 195CD; trans. Deferrari, pp. 16–17).

[132] *De sacramentis* I, I, 12: 'restat ut fiat in eo firmamentum, hoc est in bono proposito corroboretur: dividere inter aquas superiores et aquas inferiores, id est desideria carnis et

> The waters which are under the heavens are to be gathered into one place, lest the desires of the flesh should be floods, and expand beyond the bound of necessity, so that the whole man, being recalled to the status of his nature and disposed according to the order of reason, may collect into one place every desire to the end that the flesh may be subject to the spirit and the spirit to the Creator.[133]

Only after having one's desire fastened upon the highest things is one worthy of the light of the sun—able to recognize and know truth.[134] The vocabulary of *disponere*, *conformare*, *exemplar*, and *forma* provides the reader with the metaphorical tools to build his own inner world, and the concentration of desire (*desiderio in superna defixo*) indicates a central point in Hugh's pedagogy.

The story of the creation of light and its separation from darkness contains another lesson. When God saw the light, saw that it was good, and divided light from darkness and called light day and darkness night, this means that he judges everything. However, even the evil angel at times transforms himself into an angel of light, and tries to deceive the mind. This means that even the (metaphorical) light itself, in which we do our works, must first be considered cautiously.[135] This is not the only time in *De sacramentis* that the possibility of deception is looming behind something such as light, which seems, at first sight, to be positive. The possibility of deception is elaborated upon in the next chapter. Not only must we judge between day and night, between virtues and vices, but also between day and day, and night and night, to 'understand what those impulses are which come to us under the appearance of virtues, as it were, by a different light', and also to distinguish within

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spiritus, ut medius et mediator duo sibi adversantia nec permisceri sinat nec transponi' (PL 176, col. 196C; trans. Deferrari, p. 17).

[133] *De sacramentis* I, I, 12: 'ut congregentur aquae quae sub coelo sunt in locum unum, ne carnis desideria fluxa sint, et ultra metam se necessitatis expandant, ut totus homo ad statum naturae revocatus, et secundum ordinem rationis dispositus, in locum unum omne desiderium colligat, quatenus et caro spiritui, et spiritus subjectus sit Creatori' (PL 176, col. 196CD; trans. Deferrari, p. 18).

[134] *De sacramentis* I, I, 12: 'Quisquis sic ordinatus est dignus est lumine solis, ut mente sursum erecta et desiderio in superna defixo, lumen summae veritatis contemplanti irradiet, et jam non *per speculum in aenigmate*, sed in seipsa ut est veritatem agnoscat et sapiat' (PL 176, col. 196D; trans. Deferrari, p. 18).

[135] *De sacramentis* I, I, 12: 'Nam ipse angelus malus transfigurat se aliquando in angelum lucis, et ingerit se ad decipiendam mentem quasi lux vera. […] Ergo non solum studendum est ut lux praecedat in operibus nostris, et ut in luce fiant opera nostra; sed ipsa quoque lux prius videnda est et consideranda diligenter; et sic postremo cum viderimus lucem quia bona est, dividamus lucem a tenebris, et vocemus lucem diem et tenebras noctem' (PL 176, col. 197AB; trans. Deferrari, p. 18).

true virtues what is good and what is better.[136] What this amounts to is the *discretio* and *circumspectio*, which Hugh recommends in his other works.

This is, again, the focus of Hugh's further explanation of the firmament. Hugh does not want to go into the question of its nature, the subject of many philosophical debates at the time. Again, he emphasizes the tropological dimension of creation. As to why the firmament divided the waters from one another, he says, 'let him not seek outside himself, who believes that these things were made for his sake'. In this inner world the earth below is man's sensual nature, while heaven above is 'the purity of intelligence and reason animated by a kind of movement of eternal life'. These two dissimilar natures, with their contrary and conflicting desires, can only be united by reason, as a sort of firmament, mediating between these conflicting desires.[137]

The next three days, which see the adornment of the world, are treated briefly: the sun and moon and stars adorn the firmament, the birds and fishes adorn the air and the waters, the beasts and cattle and creeping things and other living things adorn the earth. Man was created not as an adornment of the earth, but as its lord and possessor. Here Hugh summarizes the story thus far as a 'convenient approach' to his subject proper: man's redemption, the *opus restaurationis*, the incarnation of the Word, prefigured by sacraments from the beginning, and followed by other sacraments to the end of the world.[138] The stage seems to be set for the arrival of man, whose creation has already been mentioned. Before turning to a more detailed account of man's appearance, however, Hugh investigates the cause of his creation. His investigation is set in the context of the inter-connectedness of all things. What defines man is his intermediate position.[139] This position is made clear by his place

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[136] *De sacramentis* I, I, 13: 'Parum est enim ad perfectum inter diem et noctem judicare, parum est lucem et tenebras dividere: hoc est virtutes a vitiis sequestrare, nisi sciamus etiam inter diem et diem judicare, et sciamus omnem diem judicare, ut sapiamus qui sint illi motus qui sub virtutum specie quasi luce aliena ad nos veniunt, et qui sursum illi sint, qui veram virtutis claritatem praetendunt; et in ipsis quoque virtutibus non solum quae bona sint, sed etiam quae sint potiora probemus' (PL 176, col. 198B; trans. Deferrari, pp. 19–20).

[137] *De sacramentis* I, I, 19: 'Quare autem factum sit ut firmamentum aquas a se divideret, partimque supra atque infra, partim earumdem aquarum natura consisteret, non quaerat extra se, qui haec propter se facta credit. Nam est illo qui interius fabricatus est mundo, quiddam hujus operis formam et exemplar habens, ubi terra quaedam deorsum posita consistit sensualis natura hominis; coelum autem sursum puritas intelligentiae, et quasi quodam immortalis vitae motu vegetata ratio. Duas vero istas tam dissimiles in uno homine naturas, magna quaedam desideriorum moles hinc inde fluctuantium, et in contraria saepe motu alterno tendentium oberrat; quia et aliud est quod subtus caro ex infirmitate pressa appetit, et aliud quod spiritus sursum per contemplationem veritatis elevatus intendit. Sed fit aliquoties ut contrarii motus confusionem gignant; nisi ratio media interveniens dividat ab invicem, et discernat voluntates et appetitus, desideriaque dijudicet' (PL 176, col. 200CD; trans. Deferrari, pp. 22–23).

[138] *De sacramentis* I, I, 28–29 (PL 176, cols 203D–204D; trans. Deferrari, pp. 26–27).

[139] See U. Possekel, 'Der Mensch in der Mitte. Aspekte der Anthropologie Hugos von St.Viktor', *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 61 (1994), 5–21.

in creation: the world was made for the sake of man, while man was made for the sake of God.[140] For a moment, the fragile character of existence which was hinted at in *In Hierarchiam coelestem* surfaces. Some might say that, given God's self-sufficiency, the conclusion is that man was made for nothing.[141] This cannot be true. As Hugh had explained in his Commentary on the Celestial Hierarchy, and as his following discussion makes clear, God made man (or, rather, rational beings in general) to his likeness and disposed him to participation.[142] Man was made by goodness, not by necessity. However, the question and its answer do convey a sense of man's gratuitous position.[143]

Another preliminary that has to be dealt with is human knowledge of God, a recurring issue in *De sacramentis*, which is closely connected to a discussion of the Trinity. From the beginning, man's knowledge of God was limited: complete knowledge would have taken away the merit of faith; complete ignorance would have been an excuse for lack of faith.[144] Reason and revelation are the two ways by which God can be known.[145] Reason finds in itself—in man's mind, wisdom and love—the likeness of the trinity, and can gain knowledge from God's creation, the outside world.[146] In Part VI, which deals with man's creation, it will become clear that, even before the Fall, man's knowledge of God, although greater than it would be after the Fall, was limited, allowing for growth and perfection.[147] Later, starting his discussion of the sacrament of faith as one of the remedies for the Fall, Hugh explains how, before the Fall, the mind had, as it were, three eyes: the eye of the

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[140] *De sacramentis* I, II, 1: 'Si ergo causa mundi homo est, quia propter hominem factus est mundus et causa hominis Deus est, quia propter Deum factus est homo' (PL 176, col. 205C; trans. Deferrari, p. 28).

[141] *De sacramentis* I, II, 1: 'Sed dicet aliquis: Quare Deus creaturam fecit si juvari ipse non potuit per creaturam? qui alteri fecit quod sibi non fecit quando alter nemo erat nisi ipse qui fecit. Quasi enim pro nihilo factum esse videtur et causam non habuisse, ut fieret quod ita factum est' (PL 176, col. 206C; trans. Deferrari, p. 29).

[142] *De sacramentis* I, II, 3: 'Fecit enim ad similitudinem suam, quod disponebat ad participationem sui, ut ex ipsa eamdem formam traheret, quod cum ipsa idem bonum possidere debuisset' (PL 176, col. 207D; trans. Deferrari, p. 31).

[143] A similar questioning can be found in *De arrha animae*: 'Quare ergo, Deus meus, fecisti me, nisi quia esse magis quam non esse uoluisti me?' (ed. Feiss and Sicard, I, 226–300, esp. p. 252; PL 176, col. 960C).

[144] *De sacramentis* I, III, 1–2 (PL 176, col. 217AB; trans. Deferrari, p. 41).

[145] *De sacramentis* I, III, 3 (PL 176, col. 217C; trans. Deferrari, p. 42). On Hugh's theory of knowledge see John P. Kleinz, *The Theory of Knowledge of Hugh of Saint Victor*, The Catholic University of America Philosophical Studies, LXXXVII (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1944).

[146] *De sacramentis* I, III, 21 (PL 176, col. 225BD; trans. Deferrari, pp. 50–51).

[147] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 14 (PL 176, col. 271; trans. Deferrari, p. 103).

flesh (*oculus carnis*), with which man could see the outside world; the eye of reason (*oculus rationis*), with which the mind could see itself; and the eye of contemplation (*oculus contemplationis*), with which it saw God. After the Fall the eye of contemplation was lost, and thus faith became necessary, and the eye of reason became clouded.[148]

A further discussion centres on the theological problem of reconciling God's omnipotence and goodness with the existence of evil. In this context, Hugh takes God's will as his point of departure. God's will can be considered in three ways: as his pleasure, as his operation, and as his permission. Precepts and prohibitions are also called his will, directed at rational creatures. Of course, God's will is one. It is human speech which distinguishes several aspects.[149] This linguistic approach allows Hugh to explain how God permitted evil, although he did not create it. Just as in *In Hierarchiam coelestem* variety was instrumental in contributing to the greater beauty of the whole, in *De sacramentis* Hugh points out how God uses evil for a greater good: by permitting evil to exist, God ensures that goodness is recommended and more beautiful. Good that comes from a combination of good and evil, is better than that which springs from good only.[150] In no way is this an excuse for man not to obey God's precepts and prohibitions.[151] Hugh's aesthetics of evil, which at first sight seem surprising, are, in fact, one step in framing a moral universe in which man has a choice.

Next, Hugh discusses in detail the creation of the angels and the fall of certain among them, which he had mentioned at the beginning of his narration of creation. This discussion enables Hugh to present the fall of the angels not only as the prehistory of the fall of man, but also as its *figura*. His many digressions may seem to be of interest only on a strictly theological level. But as digressions they are also part of the teaching which Hugh has 'compressed into a brief summa', as he stated in the prologue, to present the mind with something to which it can 'conform its attention', as an ongoing spiritual exercise. Besides, from a tropological perspective,

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[148] *De sacramentis* I, X, 2 (PL 176, cols 329C–330A; trans. Deferrari, p. 167).

[149] *De sacramentis* I, IV, 2 (PL 176, col. 235AB; trans. Deferrari, p. 61).

[150] *De sacramentis* I, IV, 6: 'Et vidit mala quae erant procul futura cum bonis priusquam erant et consideravit, quod his malis adjunctis bona commendarentur, et pulchriora fierent comparatione malorum, et bona essent mala inter bona quae non erant bona. Quoniam ex eis ornarentur bona et commendarentur, et amplius bonum acciperent ad decorem et pulchritudinem universorum' (PL 176, col. 236BC; trans. Deferrari, p. 63). Augustine had given a similar aesthetic significance to evil in *De civitate Dei*, XI, 18 ; see the edition by B. Dombart, A. Kalb, CCSL 48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), p. 337.

[151] *De sacramentis* I, IV, 23: 'Sed non pertinet ad nos neque exigitur a nobis nisi quod nostrum est et quod bonum nostrum est, tantum ut faciamus et approbemus et diligamus in nobis, sicut et Deus diligit et approbat bonum nostrum in nobis; ut ei similes simus diligendo et faciendo bona, sicut et ipse bona tantum diligit et facit (PL 176, col. 244AB; trans. Deferrari, p. 72).

they are necessary to explain man's character and further establish the conditions of his being a moral agent. Only after this has been demonstrated can the story be told of man's creation, his fall and then the beginnings of restoration.

After his discussion of the place of evil in the previous part, Hugh continues to delineate and refine the moral conditions of existence by introducing the subject of free will, and the conditions for its operation. The angels had been created after the image and likeness of God, but, just as corporeal nature, they had not yet received their full form, which they could only realize by love and conversion to the creator.[152] Their conversion, or possible turning away (*aversio*), depended on their free will.[153] They were created good and perfect, but words such as perfection can be used in different ways: what is meant here is a perfection as it was suitable at that moment, but which allowed for development[154]—and thus the possibility of failure is also implied in this meaning. The angels knew what they should do; they did not know what would happen if they did not act accordingly. If they had known what would happen and if they turned away anyway, they would have been foolish and evil already; if, on the other hand, they knew without having the possibility to avert failure, they would have been miserable.[155] They were free to choose and could not be excused because of ignorance. Just as the angels in their first creation were good, they were also happy and just. Again these words, referring to a state of innocence, do not have real meaning yet: goodness implies virtue; justice implies merit; happiness refers to glorification.[156] All these words only make sense when the

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[152] *De sacramentis* I, v, 5: 'Sicut enim visibilium et corporalium omnium materia in exordio illo conditionis primariae et formam confusionis habuit et non habuit formam dispositionis donec postea formaretur et ordinem concederet ac dispositionem; ita spiritualis et angelica natura in sui conditione per sapientiam et discretionem secundum habitum naturae formata fuit; et tamen illam quam postea per amorem et conversionem ad creatorem suum acceptura erat formam non habuit, sed erat informis sine illa formanda ab illa (PL 176, col. 249B; trans. Deferrari, p. 77).

[153] *De sacramentis* I, v, 8: 'quatuor sunt ista quae proposuimus et diximus angelis in conditione sua attributa; […] quartum vero sive ad bonum sive ad malum liberam inclinandae voluntatis et electionis propriae potestatem' (PL 76, col. 250B; trans. Deferrari, p. 78).

[154] *De sacramentis* I, v, 15–16 (PL 176, cols 252D–253B; trans. Deferrari, pp. 81–82).

[155] *De sacramentis* I, v, 18 (PL 176, col. 253CD; trans. Deferrari, 21, pp. 82–83).

[156] *De sacramentis* I, v, 19: 'Hoc modo probamus quod boni erant angeli quando primum facti sunt, et quod boni facti sunt omnes, quoniam a bono facti sunt qui malum facere non potest. Sic itaque boni erant et non mali; et quemadmodum boni erant, ita et justi erant et beati erant. Sed ea bonitate et justitia et beatitudine quam natura incipiens acceperat, non quam fecerat ipsa vel meruerat faciendo. Si enim boni dicuntur boni erant, quemadmodum bonum erat quod bonus fecerat totum. Et si meliores erant (sicut erant) meliores erant pro eo quod facti erant, non pro eo quod fecerant ipsi vel faciebant. Similiter et quod justi dicuntur, solum hoc illis erat injustos non fuisse; et quod beati, non miseros exstitisse. Verumtamen neque justi ad meritum, neque injusti ad culpam, quemadmodum neque ad glorificationem vel

possibility of evil, injustice and unhappiness, is there—and has been refused by free will. Some angels did just this and thereby turned towards God; others, by their own will, turned away from God. In an inextricable knot of grace and free will, the good angels were good voluntarily, while grace cooperated; the bad angels averted from the good as grace deserted them in the very moment of aversion.[157]

Hugh now turns to the question of what exactly went wrong, something more and more elusive as he approaches nearer to the core of the question. *Conversio* and *aversio* are a result, not of the will itself, but of something to do with the movement of the will. The will itself, as well as its movement in itself and that to which it moved, were all good, as given by God:

> Guilt itself was not the will, since the will, having been given by God, was not evil; nor was movement of the will evil, since it was from the will, and was of the will, and the will had received motion from God; nor was that toward which there was movement of the will evil, since it was something, and all that was something, was from God, and was good.[158]

If what went wrong was not the will or its movement or the object of its movement, what can it possibly be? Reflecting the famous Anselmian argument, Hugh concludes:

> What, therefore, was evil there, unless that the movement of the will was not toward what it ought to have been? And it was not for this reason, because it was toward something else toward which it ought not to have been. Nor yet was it sin to be toward this but not toward that, because if that were not, even if this were, there would be no

consummationem beati, vel ad tormentum vel poenam miseri verissime affirmantur. Et forte expressius et ad intelligentiam evidentiu (*sic*) sit, nec bonos nec malos, nec justos nec injustos nec conversos, nec aversos, nec beatos, nec misero (*sic*) conditos, asserenti. Nam qui bonos dicit, significat virtutem; qui justos, meritum; qui conversos, dilectionem; qui beatos, glorificationem' (PL 176, cols 254C–255A; trans. Deferrari, 22, p. 84).

[157] *De sacramentis* I, V, 24: 'Qui autem ad bonum convertebantur voluntarie movebantur gratia cooperante sine coactione. Qui autem a bono avertebantur sponte praecipitabantur gratia deserente sine oppressione. Et qui convertebantur, idcirco bene movebantur quia gratiam cooperantem habuerunt. Sed qui avertebantur non idcirco praecipitabantur quia gratiam cooperantem non habuerunt; sed idcirco a gratia deserebantur quia avertebantur et praecipitabantur. Et qui avertebantur non prius avertebantur et postea deserebantur, quia cum gratia non ceciderunt; et qui convertebantur non prius convertebantur et postea assumebantur, quia sine gratia non profecerunt; sed qui avertebantur in eo ipso deserebantur, et qui convertebantur in eo ipso assumebantur, pro aversione deserti et ad conversionem assumpti' (PL 176, col. 257AB; trans. Deferrari, 27, pp. 86–87).

[158] *De sacramentis* I, V, 25: 'Et ipsa culpa nec voluntas erat, quoniam voluntas malum non erat; quoniam a Deo data erat; nec motus voluntatis malum erat quoniam ex voluntate erat, et voluntatis erat, et moveri voluntas a Deo acceperat; nec id ad quod motus voluntatis erat malum erat, quoniam aliquid erat, et omne quod aliquid erat a Deo erat, et bonum erat' (PL 176, col. 257C; trans. Deferrari, 28, p. 87).

sin. Thus just as the rational mind had received the will, and received motion by will, so also it had received those things to which there could be motion by the will licitly; motion toward those was motion toward measure, and motion according to measure was motion according to justice.[159]

Finally, Hugh has introduced the element which determines what went wrong. The fallen angels fell because they willed something beyond the measure of what was to be willed, seeking what had not been granted. 'And if this had not been, there would have been no evil.' *Et hoc si non fuisset, malum nullum fuisset.* The will which had thus averted itself became ugly and lost its beauty. What exactly they willed beyond measure will only be explained later, in the story of man's fall, illustrating how the fall both of angel and man are almost the same story. Hugh ends his explanation about the nature of the angels' fall with what comes almost as a powerless afterthought about the will of the good angels: 'The will that moved rightly and was fashioned according to the will of the Creator was converted to him by whom it was controlled, and its good was not moving beyond his will from whom it was.'[160] If there was symmetry, it has been lost. Hugh hastens to add that even the evil wills of angels and men are covered by divine disposition. Regarding the remaining questions (about the number of fallen angels for example) Hugh almost casually dismisses the opinion held by some, that man was only created to provide for the restoration of angels, 'as if man would not have been made, unless the angels had fallen'. Man's existence, gratuitous as it may be as that of all creation, being the product of God's goodness, was intended from the beginning, so that, 'added to the nine orders of angels, by the addition of man the denary of celestial perfection was completed'. At the same time, man 'is said to have been made for restoring and replacing the number of fallen angels because, when man, on being created

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[159] *De sacramentis* I, V, 26: 'Quid ergo illic malum erat nisi quia motus voluntatis non erat ad quod esse debuerat? et ideo non erat quia ad aliud erat ad quod esse non debuerat, nec tamen ad hoc esse sed ad illud non esse peccatum erat, quia si illud non esset etiam si hoc esset, peccatum non esset. Mens itaque rationalis sicut voluntatem acceperat, et moveri voluntate acceperat; sic et ad quae licite voluntate moveri posset acceperat, et ad illa moveri secundum mensuram erat moveri, et moveri secundum mensuram erat moveri secundum justitiam. Et si ad illa tantum mota fuisset secundum justitiam mota fuisset, et fuisset justa voluntas, quoniam secundum justitiam mota fuisset. Quando autem ad ea mota est quae concessa non fuerant, extra mensuram mota est, et in eo secundum mensuram mota non est. Et ibi malum illi erat secundum mensuram non moveri' (PL 176, cols 257D–258A; trans. Deferrari, 29, p. 87). Compare Anselmus, *De casu diaboli*, in *S. Anselmi Cantuarensi Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, I, 227–276 (esp. caput IV, pp. 240–242).

[160] *De sacramentis* I, V, 26: 'Quae autem recte movebatur et secundum Creatoris voluntatem conformabatur, convertebatur ad eum a quo regebatur; et illi bonum erat extra illius voluntatem non moveri a quo erat' (PL 176, col. 258B; trans. Deferrari, 29, p. 88).

afterwards, was conducted to that place whence they had fallen, the number of that society which had been diminished by these falling is repaired by man'.[161]

Evil's inevitability is hardly suspended by Hugh's emphatic past conditional, *Et hoc si non fuisset*, as is shown when Hugh finally turns to man's creation. Even while investigating how things would have been if man had not fallen, a purely pre-lapsarian perspective is barely possible. The story of man before the Fall persistently reflects the post-lapsarian viewpoint—just as the pre-lapsarian view shines through where Hugh presents the story of man after the Fall. The claim that 'if this had not been, there would have been no evil' resounds as a reminder of the reader's origin and final destination: the heavenly fatherland. The answers to the questions about man before the Fall emphasize that man's was an intermediate position from the very beginning. In man, for instance, spirit and matter are joined, as a sign of the future society of God and spirit:

> Omnipotent God, whose happiness can be neither increased in any way, since it is perfect, nor diminished, since it is eternal, by charity alone, not by any necessity on his part, created rational spirit, so that he might make it as sharer in that good which he himself was, and by which he himself was happy. […] He ordered the rational creature which he had made in part to persist in its purity; in part, joining it to corporeal coverings and earthly habitations, he caused slimy matter to quicken to the feeling of life, this, indeed, having been proposed as a pattern of the future society which was to be realized between himself and rational spirit […] that man might know that if God could join such different natures as body and soul in one union, by no means would it be impossible to him to elevate the lowness of the rational creature, although far inferior, to participation in his own glory.[162]

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[161] *De sacramentis* I, V, 30: 'ut addito homine denarius consummaretur perfectionis coelestis. Non enim ut quidam putant conditio hominis ita ad restaurationem angelorum provisa est, quasi homo non fuisset factus, nisi angelus cecidisset; sed idcirco ad restaurandum et supplendum lapsorum angelorum numerum factus homo dicitur; quia cum homo postmodum creatus illuc unde illi ceciderunt ductus est, illius societatis numerus qui in cadentibus diminutus fuerat, per hominem reparatur' (PL 176, col. 260CD; trans. Deferrari, 33, p. 91). Compare Anselmus, *Cur Deus Homo*, in *S. Anselmi Cantuarensi Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia* I, 18, p. 76–84 for the same position.

[162] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 1: 'Deus omnipotens cujus beatitudo nec augeri potest omnino, quoniam perfecta est, nec minui, quoniam aeterna est, sola charitate, nulla sui necessitate, rationalem Spiritum creavit, ut eum illius boni quod ipse erat, et quo ipse beatus erat, participem faceret. […] Creaturam ergo rationalem quam fecerat, jussit partim in sua puritate persistere; partim eam corporeis indumentis et terrenis mansionibus copulans, luteam materiam fecit ad vitae sensum vegetare. Hoc siquidem pro exemplo futurae societatis quae inter ipsum et Spiritum rationalem in glorificationem ejusdem perficienda fuerat proposito […] Ut sciret homo quod si potuit Deus tam disparem naturam corporis et animae ad unam foederationem atque amicitiam conjungere, nequaquam ei impossibile futurum, rationalis creaturae humilitatem (licet longe inferiorem) ad suae gloriae participationem sublimare' (PL 176, col. 263B–D; trans. Deferrari, p. 94).

Man thus occupies a position between God and the world, sharing in the world of spirit and the world of body. Man was placed in a middle position, 'that he might have sense within and without; within for invisible things, without for visible; within through the sense of reason, without through the sense of flesh.'[163] In time as well, he is somewhere in the middle, in a state of relative perfection. Many questions can be asked about the condition of man before sin, or how he would have been if he had not sinned.[164] In many respects, man and his knowledge had yet to be further perfected. If only man would have persevered in his obedience—after the time defined by God he would have been translated, without pain of death, to the good which had been prepared for him in heaven.[165] Hugh explains man's creation after the image and likeness of God: image according to man's reason, likeness according to love.[166] He discusses the origin of the soul of the first man,[167] and his free will,[168] as well as man's possibilities of knowing God and knowing himself.[169] He asks whether man had virtues before sin, and whether they conferred merit—as virtues, it seems, cannot be without merit. Hugh distinguishes between virtues according to nature and according to grace, and, in a definition which includes both, he presents an important point about man's affective life:

> For virtue is nothing else than an affection of the mind ordered according to reason, and such affections are said to be very numerous according to the various inclinations of the same mind, yet having one root and one origin, the will. For one will, according as it inclines itself to various things either by seeking or avoiding, forms various affections, and receives divers names according to the same affections, although, however, all these things are in one will, and are one will.[170]

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[163] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 5: 'Et positus est in medio homo ut intus et foris sensum haberet. Intus ad invisibilia, foris ad visibilia. Intus per sensum rationis, foris per sensum carnis, ut ingrederetur et contemplaretur; et egrederetur et contemplaretur, intus sapientiam, foris opera sapientiae' (PL 176, col. 266D; trans. Deferrari, p. 97).

[164] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 11 (PL 176, col. 270B; trans. Deferrari, p. 101).

[165] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 29: 'Si ergo homo in hac obedientia perstitisset, post tempus definitum a Deo ad illum bonum quod ei in coelis praeparatum fuerat sine mortis dolore transferri debuisset' (PL 176, col. 282D trans. Deferrari, p. 115).

[166] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 2 (PL 176, col. 264CD; trans. Deferrari, p. 95).

[167] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 3 (PL 176, cols 264D–265B; trans. Deferrari, pp. 95–96).

[168] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 4 (PL 176, cols 265C–266B; trans. Deferrari, pp. 96–97).

[169] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 14–15 (PL 176, cols 271C–272C; trans. Deferrari, pp. 103–104).

[170] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 17: 'Virtus namque nihil aliud est quam affectus mentis secundum rationem ordinatus, qui secundum varias ejusdem mentis applicationes plurimi esse dicuntur, unam tamen radicem et originem habentes, voluntatem. Una enim voluntas secundum quod se ad varia vel appetendo vel fugiendo inclinat varios format affectus, et diversa secundum eosdem affectus nomina sortitur, cum tamen omnia haec in una sint voluntate, et una voluntas' (PL 176, col. 273BC; trans. Deferrari, p. 105). For the place of virtue in Hugh's

The discussion which now follows recalls Hugh's earlier efforts to establish what makes man (or rational beings in general) moral agents. In his examination of the *conversio* or *aversio* of the angels, free will turned out to be decisive: before the moment of the Fall, the angels were good and just and happy by a natural goodness, justice and happiness, rather than by their own free choice.[171] In his analysis of virtues Hugh insists on the role of grace (*gratia reparatrix*). He concludes that man had natural virtues in paradise, such as were implanted in him: affects ordered according to nature (or *gratia creatrix*, as he explained), by which he was naturally drawn to seek goodness and justice. If man wills according to nature this does not imply merit outside of nature—although Hugh is reluctant to say that natural virtues, laudable because they are good, merit nothing at all; but the merit consists in natural goodness. The concept of virtues according to nature seems to confirm a state of innocence, outside man's moral agency—which is really bound up with the situation after the Fall. Hugh shifts to a post-lapsarian perspective when he discusses virtue according to grace. Merit is only implied if one wills something for the sake of God, meaning man deserves a premium beyond nature: the presence of God. Hugh emphasizes the *gratia reparatrix* here, more than when he discussed the fall of the angels, and insists that it is the Holy Spirit who first effects this 'good will' and then cooperates with man. Hugh is not sure whether man, before the Fall, had these virtues 'according to grace'. Even if man began to love his creator, this act was not at all praiseworthy, because he did not persevere, and the movement of incipient virtue was extinguished:[172] again the Fall casts its shadow.

Hugh examines many other aspects of man's situation as it would have been had he not sinned, providing a dream-like perspective of something that never was. Man probably would have cultivated the land, not as an exercise of labour but for pleasure. Even here the inner man would have had an example from his outer work, although the evocation of bucolic happiness contains a hint of the potential for things to go wrong:

> For thus the exterior man had to be practised […] that in what he should do externally
> he might learn what had to be done by him within. For within also in a similar manner
> was there a kind of land which had indeed been created good, and yet, if it were well

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work see also my 'Hugh of Saint-Victor's Virtue. Ambivalence and Gratuity', in *Virtue and Ethics in the Twelfth Century,* ed. by István P. Bejczy and Richard G. Newhauser, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History (Leiden: Brill; forthcoming). On the development of the idea of 'natural virtues' in a sense different from Hugh's (that is, as virtues possessed by pagans) see the article by István P. Bejczy, 'The Problem of Natural Virtue' in the same volume.

[171] *De sacramentis* I, V, 19 (PL 176, cols 254C–255A; trans. Deferrari, 22, p. 84).

[172] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 17: 'Etsi quidem amare creatorem suum coepit, hoc tamen omnino laudabile non fuit, quia non perseveravit; quia motus incipientis virtutis exstinctus est' (PL 176, col. 275A; trans. Deferrari, p. 107).

cultivated, could be still better; when cultivated it would produce good fruits, but when neglected it would bring forth bad and harmful offshoots.[173]

At the same time Hugh's emphasis on the priority of *reparatio* over *conditio* suggests that, however disastrous the Fall may have been, nothing has been irretrievably lost. At one point, for instance, Hugh considers the three states of man: the first state before sin; the second state after sin; the third state after the resurrection from the dead, when man will be restored 'not only to that in which he was created, but above that also even to that for which he was created'.[174] Man could have achieved blessedness by voluntarily persevering in his obedience to divine precepts, thereby realizing his *conversio*. A long discussion establishes what sort of precepts qualified as a test for man. The test had to be in the form of a prohibition: if it had been a command—to eat from the Tree—the devil could have calumniated man's obedience as merely indulging in his delight of the fruit. It had to be a simple prohibition, so that man could not have an excuse for his disobedience.[175]

With regard to the concrete history of Adam and Eve, their significance as *figurae* representing every man and mankind's destiny is obvious. God first created only man, so the beginning of the human race would be one, and to confound the devil, who had sought another beginning from God.[176] As an enduring presence on the scene, the devil is, by now, critically following God's arrangements for man. Eve was created from the side of man, not from the head nor from the feet, 'that it might be shown that she was created for association in love [...] neither as a mistress nor as a handmaid, but as a companion'.[177] The equality which seems to reign in companionship does not exclude hierarchy at another level. Later in *De sacramentis*,

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[173] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 21: 'Sic namque exterior homo exercendus erat ab ipso studio exterioris operis, ut forma sumeretur studii interioris; et in eo quod foris faceret, agnosceret quid sibi intus faciendum esset. Nam et intus similiter quaedam terra erat quae bona quidem creata erat, et tamen si bene excoleretur adhuc melior esse poterat; quae culta fructus bonos daret, neglecta vero mala et noxia germina proferret' (PL 176, cols 276D–277A; trans. Deferrari, p. 109).

[174] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 10: 'Primus status hominis fuit ante peccatum in eo in quo fuit conditus. Secundus status est post peccatum (si tamen status dicendus est, et non potius ruina) in quem per peccatum et poenam peccati post peccatum sequentem, est lapsus. Tertius status erit hominis post resurrectionem a mortuis, quando plene et perfecte tam a peccato quam a poena peccati liberabitur; et non solum in id in quo fuit conditus, sed supra id etiam usque ad illud ad quod conditus fuit restituetur' (PL 176, cols 269D–270A; trans. Deferrari, p. 101).

[175] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 29 (PL 176, cols 281C–282D; trans. Deferrari, pp. 114–115).

[176] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 34 (PL 176, col. 284AB; trans. Deferrari, p. 117).

[177] *De sacramentis* I, VI, 35: 'Facta est autem de latere viri ut ostenderetur quod in consortium creabatur dilectionis [...]. Quia igitur viro nec domina nec ancilla parabatur sed socia; nec de capite, nec de pedibus, sed de latere fuerat producenda ut juxta se ponendam cognosceret; quam de juxta se sumptam didicisset' (PL 176, col. 284C; trans. Deferrari, p. 117).

in his first exposition of the sacraments as part of the *reparatio*, Hugh returns to the association between the two first human beings, marriage being the only sacrament instituted before the Fall. As a sacrament it symbolizes many things: the love between God and the soul, the bond between Christ and the Church.[178] At another level, marriage—the association of male and female— symbolizes human nature: 'Human nature was distinguished by a twofold quality, so that in man indeed it appeared the stronger, but in woman the weaker and in need of another's help.'[179] In man, even in his pre-lapsarian state, there was a hierarchy, symbolized by man, woman and beast:

> Reason in fact was established in man in the highest place, directing its attention to divine and invisible things alone and conforming itself to the divine will; then a certain other reason, looking to corporeal and visible things, which was subject to the higher and, informed by it, dominated sensibility, which was subject to it and which was established in the lowest place. And thus these three things were found in man: wisdom, prudence and sensibility. […] Man, therefore, was the image of wisdom, woman the form of prudence, but beast the likeness of sensibility and concupiscense.[180]

It was in woman, the weaker part of humanity, that evil struck. With a final explanation of how the creation of Eve from Adam's rib exemplifies God's multi-faceted approach to creation, the scene has been prepared for the story of man's fall.

The story of man's fall turns out to be more complicated than the preceding exposition on precepts, prohibitons and obedience would suggest. The devil was envious 'that man should ascend through obedience whence he himself had fallen through pride'.[181] Not able to destroy him by a means other than fraud, the devil

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[178] *De sacramentis* I, VIII, 13 (PL 176, cols 314C–318A; trans. Deferrari, pp. 151–154).

[179] *De sacramentis* I, VIII, 13: 'Propterea natura humana duplici qualitate distincta est, ut in viro quidem robustior, in femina vero infirmior et aliena epe egens appareret' (PL 176, col. 315A; trans. Deferrari, p. 151).

[180] *De sacramentis* I, VIII, 13: 'Erat quippe in homine ratio supremo loco constituta, solis divinis et invisibilibus intendens et divinae voluntati se conformans. Post haec alia quaedam ratio ad corporalia et visibilia respiciens, quae subjiciebatur superiori, et ab illa informata subjectae sibi sensualitati dominabatur, quae tertio et imo loco fuerat constituta. Sic itaque tria inventa sunt in homine: sapientia, prudentia et sensualitas. […] Erat igitur vir imago sapientiae, femina forma prudentiae, bestia autem similitudo sensualitatis et concupiscentiae' (PL 176, cols 315D–316A; trans. Deferrari, pp. 152–153). These elements reflect the twelfth-century doctrine of sin: concupiscence first suggests the delight of sin to the prudence of the flesh; the prudence of the flesh deceived by the delight of sin draws reason to consent to iniquity. See Robert Blomme, *La Doctrine du péché dans les écoles théologiques de la première moitié du XIIe siècle* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain; Gembloux: Éditions J. Duculot, S.A., 1958).

[181] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 1: 'vidit diabolus et invidit quod homo illuc per obedientiam ascenderet, unde ipse per superbiam corruisset' (PL 176, col. 287B; trans. Deferrari, p. 121).

came in the form of a serpent. God permitted man to be deceived, but in such a way that the devil's malice would not be entirely concealed, so that man would have no excuse.[182] He came to the woman as to that part of human nature where it seemed weaker.[183] The devil's behaviour illustrates 'how great is the confusion and timidity of inequity in the sight of virtue'—thus Hugh generalizes the event of the Fall into a moral consideration, before telling the story and commenting on it:

> As if fearing that he was already caught before he even spoke, he does not dare to enter upon words of persuasion until by questioning he tried out beforehand the mind of her to be tempted. 'Why', he says, 'hath God commanded you that you should eat of every tree of paradise?' And the woman answered him: 'Of the fruit of the trees that are in paradise we do eat: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of paradise, God hath commanded us that we should not eat; and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die.' And the serpent said to the woman: 'No you shall not die the death.' Consider the accentuations of wickedness [or one might translate: the increase of ruin: *incrementa perditionis*]. First, God had said: 'For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death.' Then woman said: 'Lest perhaps we die.' Lastly, the serpent said: 'No, you shall not die the death.' God affirmed, woman doubted, the devil denied. [184]

The Fall is thus attributed, not to Eve's disobedience and pride in the first place, but to something preceding this disobedience—doubt and hesitation—the temptation to interpret God's words: 'By no means would the devil have presumed in the presence of woman to deny the words of God, if he had not first found woman herself in doubt.' By this doubt she distanced herself from God.[185]

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[182] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 2 (PL 176, col. 287BC; trans. Deferrari, p. 121).

[183] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 3 (PL 176, cols 287D–288B; trans. Deferrari, p. 121).

[184] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 4: 'Considerate quanta est confusio et timiditas nequitiae in conspectu virtutis. Stans coram et coram femina hostis superbus ex sola malitia cogitata nondum dicta confunditur; et quasi se jam prius quam etiam loqueretur deprehensum metuens, non audet exire in verba persuasionis, donec animum tentendae interrogatione praesentiat. *Cur*, inquit, *praecepit Deus vobis ut non comederetis de omni ligno paradisi? Cui respondit mulier: De fructu lignorum quae sunt in paradiso vescimur; de fructu autem ligni quod est in medio paradisi praecepit nobis Deus ne comederemus et ne tangeremus illud, ne forte moriamur. Dixit autem serpens ad mulierem: Nequaquam morte moriemini.* Considerate incrementa perditionis. Primum dixerat Deus: *In quocunque die comederis ex eo, morte morieris.* Deinde mulier dixit: *Ne forte moriamur.* Novissime serpens dixit: *Nequaquam morte moriemini.* Deus affirmavit; mulier dubitavit; diabolus negavit' (PL 176, col. 288BC; trans. Deferrari, p. 122).

[185] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 4: 'Nequaquam autem diabolus coram muliere verba Dei negare praesumpsisset, si non prius ipsam mulierem dubitantem invenisset. Quae ergo dubitavit ab affirmante recessit, et neganti appropinquavit. Ipsa igitur secundum aliquid inchoavit malitiam, quae tentatoris inique persuasionis dedit audaciam' (PL 176, col. 288CD; trans. Deferrari, p. 122). Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* XI, 30 (Zycha, p. 362), does not mention

By his false promise to Eve, the devil also unveils that which was at the root of his own *aversio*: he promised likeness of God and knowledge of good and evil.[186] It was not the desire of likeness itself which was evil, but desiring it inordinately, before its time.[187] The character of the devil's *aversio*, the inordinate movement of his will, has now become more tangible. While Hugh goes on to analyse Eve's sin in traditional categories—her sin consists in pride, avarice and gluttony[188]—his inclusion of doubt in the story of the Fall, even by its very transitory appearance, lends an elusive air to this massive catastrophe.

What follows shows that, just as there was a flaw in creation from the beginning, the door to reparation is left ajar, if only in the awareness of its possibility. If Adam sinned as well, it was not because he was seduced, for he knew that what the devil promised was false. Behind Adam's consent was his affection for Eve, as well as his assumption of the possibility of forgiveness:

> He did not eat the forbidden apple on this account, as if through eating he believed that he could be made equal to God or even wished to be made equal, but only lest by resisting her will and petition he might offend the heart of the woman who had been associated with him through the affection of love, especially since he thought that he could both yield to the woman and afterwards through repentance and supplication for pardon please the Creator. Truly then it is said that he sinned less who thought of repentance and mercy.[189]

As Hugh had shown before, Adam was right in assuming forgiveness. The devil, who had sinned without temptation, did not deserve forgiveness, but man, who fell because he was overcome by external temptation, would be raised by grace.[190]

Hugh does not mention the common *audacia defensionis* with which both sinners responded when God asked them where they were, defending themselves rather than confessing their sin.[191] Sin was real enough, though, and Adam's sin may have been

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Eve's doubt. The Vetus Latina translation, used by Augustine, does not have the *forte* of Eve's answer (*ne forte moriamur*).

[186] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 6 (PL 176, col. 289A; trans. Deferrari, pp. 122–123).

[187] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 7 (PL 176, col. 289C; trans. Deferrari, p. 123).

[188] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 7–8 (PL 176, cols 289B–290B; trans. Deferrari, pp. 123–124).

[189] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 10: 'Neque idcirco pomum vetitum comedit, quasi per illam comestionem Deo parificari se posse crederet, vel etiam parificari vellet; sed tantum ne mulieris animum quae sibi per affectum dilectionis sociata fuerat, ejus petitioni et voluntati resistendo contristaret. Maxime quia putavit se et mulieri morem gerere; et postea per poenitentiam et veniae postulationem Creatori posse placere. Vere igitur dictum est quia minus peccavit qui de poenitentia et misericordia cogitavit' (PL 176, col. 291A; trans. Deferrari, p. 125).

[190] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 9 (PL 176, col. 290BC; trans. Deferrari, p. 124).

[191] See Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* XI, 35: 'superbia! numquid dixit: peccavi? habet deformitatem confusionis et non habet confessionis humilitatem' (Zycha, p. 369, ll. 19–20).

less grave than Eve's, but he sinned by consenting to Eve. A general point about sin and temptation is attached to this story:

> Now if we wish to consider interiorly, how sin came to him, or even what sin itself is which vitiates good nature and takes away its beauty and integrity, we must bring in the midst of our discussion certain things about the quality of interior man which will seem necessary to this investigation.[192]

This investigation of the interior man centers around his desires (*appetitus*) and the inability to restrain them. It is an elaborate discussion of an issue which is central to Hugh's pedagogy in his other works, implying the Anselmian distinction between *commodum* and *justitia*. God had placed two desires in man: the desire for the just, which is voluntary (in the sense that man could freely retain it or desert it); and the desire for the beneficial, which follows necessity. If man had retained the desire for the just even though he could have deserted it, he would have been rewarded with benefit. When he deserted this desire, man was punished with the loss, not only of justice, but of the beneficial as well, though he did not lose the desire for the beneficial, and this increased his unhappiness. He lost his desire for justice when he ceased to will what is just; or, in other words, when he willed something beyond a measure which was just. Man obviously ought to have desired the highest good, but he should also have recognized how to enjoy that good, not wishing for equality, which transcends human possibilities, but striving to achieve it by imitation. Similarly, he should not try to receive it before time, or before he had completed his obedience.[193]

Compare Bernard of Clairvaux, who mentions the 'rebellio defensionis', *De praecepto et dispensatione* XI, 27, *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. by J. Leclercq, C. H. Talbot, H. Rochais (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957–1977), III, p. 272, l. 29. On the *audacia defensionis* in Gregory the Great see Friedrich Ohly, *Metaphern für die Sundenstufen und die Gegenwirkungen der Gnade*, Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vorträge G 302 (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990), pp. 17–18. For the narrative tradition on the Fall see Eric Jager, *The Tempter's Voice: Language and the Fall in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

[192] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 10: 'Si autem interius considereare voluerimus quomodo peccatum in eum venit, quid aut etiam fit ipsum peccatum quod naturam bonam vitiat, et tollit pulchritudinem et integritatem illius, quaedam de interioris hominis qualitate quae ad hanc considerationem necessaria videantur in medium proponere oportet' (PL 176, col. 291B; trans. Deferrari, p. 125).

[193] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 15: 'In hoc ergo solo mensura constabat ut agnosceretur qualiter illo bono frui deberet, ne inordinate illud (non quidem ad imitationem sicut creaturae convenit; sed ad aequalitatem quod creaturae possibilitatem transcendit) possidere concupisceret. Similiter ut attenderet ne illud ante tempus praecipere festinaret; cum illud priusquam obedientiam consumasset accipere non deberet' (PL 176, col. 293C; trans. Deferrari, pp. 127–128).

As sin is located in desire, so is punishment. Man was punished with the remaining desire for the beneficial. There is a double punishment here: in being restrained from the things which he could desire ordinately, or in not being able to restrain himself in desiring things which cannot be desired ordinately.[194] The first is punishment only, the other implies blame as well, the blame being punishment at the same time. And thus the endless process of desire and guilt is started: man is unable to restrain his desire even for what is necessary, and the care for his body, which would have been a pleasure rather than a task, now becomes the occasion of labour:

> But because the spirit exalted above itself did not wish to restrain its desire within measure, on this account was it brought about to its toil and misery that now in the desire of its flesh it could not keep measure. For to punish the sin of the spirit, God by mortality destroyed the integrity of the human body; and because of this it now needs more nourishment than before […]. Hence that dire necessity is born to extend desire necessarily beyond the order of the first disposition.[195]

As the corruption of original sin is passed on to posterity, Hugh turns, in the remaining parts of this book, to look at man's *reparatio*.

Restoration

Hugh starts by restating what is involved in man's punishment. Mortality is punishment, concupiscence of the flesh and ignorance constitute punishment and also contribute to man's ever increasing guilt. A bleak perspective indeed, and man might have descended to eternal punishment, had he not afterwards been freed through grace. Judgement was delayed. 'Since divine mercy foreordained him to salvation, in this time of expectation and delay it assigned him a place for repentance and correction.'[196] Thus, after having told the story of the Fall, Hugh begins the discussion of man's restoration. Three things are presented which illustrate man's

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[194] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 17: 'Quia igitur homo appetitum justitiae deseruit; appetitus commodi solus, illi ad poenam remansit. In quo quidem dupliciter punitur, sive cum ab iis quae ordinate appetit restringitur, sive cum ad alia commoda quae ordinate appeti non possunt appetenda relaxatur' (PL 176, col. 294D; trans. Deferrari, p. 129).

[195] *De sacramentis* I, VII, 19: 'Sed, quia spiritus supra se elatus appetitum suum intra mensuram cohibere noluit, idcirco ad laborem et miseriam illius factum est ut jam in appetitu carnis suae mensuram tenere non posset. Propter peccatum enim spiritus puniendum fregit Deus mortalitate integritatem corporis humani; et ob hoc pluribus jam fomentis indiget quam prius tam ad reparandam incolumitatem quantum periit quam ad conservandam, quantum remansit. Hinc illa dira necessitas gignitur, ut extra ordinem primae dispositionis necessario appetitum extendat' (PL 176, col. 295D; trans. Deferrari, p. 130).

[196] *De sacramentis* I, VIII, 1: 'Et quia divina eum misericordia ad salutem praeordinavit; in hoc tempore exspectationis et dilationis locum poenitentiae ei et correctionis assignavit' (PL 176, col. 305C ; trans. Deferrari, pp. 141–142).

intermediate position and also redefine it: time, place and the remedy for his fall. Man's position is not only between spiritual and corporeal creatures, or between the visible and the invisible, but between good and evil: man's life, between the beginning and the end of the world, is the time in which reparation will happen; this world is the place, between heaven and hell; the sacraments are the remedy. The time is long, the place is difficult, but the remedy is adequate.[197]

Only now, against the background of this moral indeterminacy, does the intermediary position, which Hugh had introduced earlier, reveal its true significance. The remaining parts of Book One of *De sacramentis* are dedicated to the remedy of the sacraments, while at the same time framing time and place. They reflect Hugh's view that both knowledge and virtue are important. Hugh begins with a dramatic 'case' in which man, God and the devil are all involved, and a 'cur Deus homo' that illustrates God's pedagogical intent: God could have chosen a different way of redemption, but to suit our infirmity, he became man.[198] Hugh presents a comprehensive treatment of *sacramentum* in its different meanings and different manifestations throughout history, which is divided in a time before the law, a time under the law and a time of grace. The intricate connection between the outside world and inner life, between the physical and the spiritual, which runs through Hugh's *Institutio novitiorum* as well as through his Commentary on the Celestial Hierarchy, is also at the heart of his *De sacramentis*, and this is clear in his very definition of sacrament: 'A sacrament is a corporeal or material element set before the senses without, representing by similitude and signifying by institution and containing by sanctification some invisible and spiritual grace.'[199]

The sacraments valid in the time of grace are the subject of Book Two. This book's all-embracing and many-layered character, starting with a long discussion of the incarnation and ending with the end of time, provides the reader with practical information about many aspects of the sacraments, and their effect on the inner man. In staccato-rythmed passages, Hugh involves the reader directly, addressing possible objections or questions, presenting doctrinal points in a dramatic way. He offers the reader a wide view of the world and its history, and a final perspective of a world without end—like its genesis, an object appropriate for meditation.

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[197] *De sacramentis* I, VIII, 1: 'Tria ergo hic in reparatione hominis primo loco consideranda occurrunt: tempus, locus, remedium. Tempus est praesens vita ab initio mundi usque ad finem saeculi. Locus est mundus iste. Remedium in tribus constat: in fide, in sacramentis, in operibus bonis. Tempus longum, ne imparatus praeoccupetur. Locus asper, ut praevaricator castigetur. Remedium efficax, ut infirmus sanetur' (PL 176, cols 305D–306C; trans. Deferrari, p. 142).

[198] *De sacramentis* I, VIII, 4–10 (PL 176, cols 307D–312A; trans. Deferrari, pp. 143–148).

[199] *De sacramentis* I, IX, 2: 'sacramentum est corporale vel materiale elementum foris sensibiliter propositum ex similitudine repraesentans, et ex institutione significans, et ex sanctificatione continens aliquam invisibilem et spiritualem gratiam' (PL 176, col. 317D; trans. Deferrari, p. 155).

In *De sacramentis* it is Hugh's sense of life's ambiguity, a consequence of man's ambivalent position, which creates the space for man as a moral being. The tension inherent in a creation where restoration was superior, even before a Fall, is thus eased. The significance of pre-lapsarian time as part of history is as a point of reference to be glimpsed—a trompe-l'oeil, rather than an absolute starting-point; a utopia, flawed from the very beginning, but resonating as the reverse side of reality, propelling the text, and the reader, forward through Hugh's *narratio*. Man, in his ambivalent position, has to choose between good and evil. However, through Eve's sin, something deeper than free will appears: doubt and interpretation. By discussing throughout *De sacramentis* all sorts of possible interpretations, and by pointing the way to the right or most probable one, Hugh guides his readers in this necessary but potentially fraught process.

Far from being a one-time decision or a simple issue of conforming to the rules, in Hugh's view the religious life demands a constant effort. 'I do not know whether man's whole life can suffice to make this journey', Hugh exclaims in his Homilies on the Ecclesiast, one of the works to which I shall now turn, and in which he adopts yet another point of view as he offers his readers something to which they can 'conform their attention'.[200]

An Economy of Desire

While in *De sacramentis* and in *In Hierarchiam coelestem* a tropological reading is woven into the broad perspective of cosmology and history, in several more strictly devotional works—although they contain no less *doctrina*—these perspectives are drawn into the contemplative activity of the reader. From yet another angle Hugh's anthropology, epistemology and pedagogy are implied in each other, analysing and remedying the human condition. The aim of *De archa morali*, as Hugh explains in the prologue to this work, could well apply to other similar works, and is comparable to that stated in the prologue of *De sacramentis*. Originating in the conventual *collationes*, this work deals with the unrest of the human heart and its cause.[201] However, far from being a causal analysis, these works can also be read

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[200] *Homiliae in Ecclesiasten* (hereafter *In Eccles.*) X: 'O quam difficilis transitus et quam multorum dierum via infirmos gressus habentibus! Et nescio an tota vita hominis sufficere possit ad conficiendum hoc iter' (PL 175, col. 174D).

[201] See *De archa Noe pro arche sapientie cvm archa ecclesie at archa matris gratie*, I, 1: 'Cum sederem aliquando in conuentu fratrum et, illis interrogantibus meque respondente, multa in medium prolata fuissent, ad hoc tandem deducta sunt uerba, ut de humani potissimum cordis instabilitate et inquietudine ammirari omnes simul et suspirare inciperemus', quoted from *De archa Noe. Libellus de formatione arche*, ed. by Patricius Sicard, CCCM 176 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001) p. 3, ll. 1–5. See also Sicard, *Diagrammes médiévaux*, p. 22. On Hugh's treatises on the ark see also the following articles by Grover A.

with Hugh's definition of meditation in mind, as he had discussed it in the *Didascalicon*: meditation takes its point of departure in reading, *lectio*, but is 'bound by none of reading's rules or precepts. For it delights to range along open ground, where it fixes its free gaze upon the contemplation of truth.'[202] According to this instruction—comparable to Anselm's 'user's guide' for his meditations—the reader may feel free to begin at any point. These works are presented as a search for the causes of man's unrest; but they also stir the mind into a state of unrest, before showing the way out. If the cause underlying man's endless instability is his loss of the original simplicity of a focus on God, and desire's subsequent inclination to the multiple things of the world, its remedy consists in withdrawing from the world of the transitory and concentrating one's desire on the eternal good.[203]

This remedy is metaphorically identified with making one's heart into a dwelling place for God, as well as an ark, using one's *affectus* and thoughts as the material. Other biblical stories and images, evoked by association, are also employed to represent the need of practising an economy of feeling and thinking. Hugh's explanation of religious affective economy in *De virtute orandi* applies to his own works as well. Hugh analyses the texts and applies his 'passion taxinomique',[204] whether to virtues or to different sorts of vanity and to several meanings of the ark. In *De archa*, a column in the middle of the structure is Christ, the tree of life, an image which is then used for an elaborate discussion of a succession of virtues. If Hugh's distinctions sometimes form rather long digressions, at one level this mirrors the process which the reader has to follow, undertaking a constant effort of concentration to follow these digressions which correspond to man's fragmented thinking and feeling. The digressions are part of the 'open ground' of meditation. At the level of Hugh's literary performance, these digressions break the structure of the texts, often determined by the exegetical process and its many mnemotechnic distinctions, and lend them an air of suspense.

This reflects a tension which is also evident in *De sacramentis* and in *In Hierarchiam coelestem*. On the one hand, the visible world of transitory things is to be held in contempt. The world is the Flood from which man has to escape. On the other hand, there is nothing wrong with the visible world as such. On the contrary,

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Zinn: 'Hugh of St. Victor and the Ark of Noah: A New Look', *Church History*, 40 (1971), 261–272; 'Mandala Symbolism and Use in the Mysticism of Hugh of St. Victor', *History of Religions*, 12 (1972–1973), 317–341; 'Hugh of Saint Victor and the Art of Memory', *Viator*, 5 (1974), 211–234; 'Hugh of St Victor, Isaiah's vision and *De arca Noe*', in *The Chucrh and the Arts*, ed. by Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 99–116.

[202] See *Didascalicon* III, 10 (Buttimer, p. 59).

[203] For a comprehensive analysis of *De archa* see Sicard, *Diagrammes médiévaux*. On Anselm's Meditations see Pranger, *The Artificiality of Christianity*, pp. 107–150.

[204] The expression is from Michel Lemoine, *L'Art de lire. Le Didascalicon de Hugues de Saint-Victor* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1991), p. 22.

as Hugh had showed in his *In Hierarchiam coelestem*, the visible world contains the signs leading towards the invisible world. The world's diverse beauties are 'the veins through which the invisible beauty pours down',[205] to provoke man's feeling. Indeed, it is this human *affectus* where the real problem lies. And again, as in *De sacramentis*, a pre-lapsarian perspective shows through, not so much in any historical sense but, rather, as a photographic negative, the home contrasting with man's unmistakably alienated existence.

The Vanity of the World

In *De vanitate mundi*, Hugh starts not with a strict exegesis at all but with variations on the theme of vanity, in the form of a dialogue between reason and the soul. The point of departure is the reader's capacity to observe the world, not from the point of view of the world as the appearance (*species*) of divine work, as it was presented in *In Hierarchiam coelestem*, but as the scene for the instability of human life. Reason asks the soul to draw the world into its imagination, not just with the eyes of the body, but from a superior mental perspective: 'put yourself as it were on some looking post of the mind', *constitue igitur te quasi in quadam mentis specula*.[206] To achieve this perspective the soul first casts off the things to which it usually adheres by thoughts and feelings. With vivid evocations the soul then describes the happy or idyllic scenes which it inwardly pictures of all sorts of human affairs: sailors at sea, travelling merchants, a married couple, students in a classroom. Pressed by its teacher, the soul detects in all these scenes a negative turn: in the end, all is transitory and vanity. After these vignettes which convincingly show the vanity of the world, the prologue to the second book draws the past into the picture, as reason asks: where are our fathers, where are the rich and mighty whom we saw elevated in the glory of the world; where, finally (a sense of loneliness seems to transpire) are all those whose friendship and familiarity we took for granted? They have all passed before us and we are left behind alone. On second thoughts, however (thus reason continues its musings) they have not just left, but they point to the direction for our

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[205] *In Eccles*. II: Omnis jucunditas, omnis suavitas, omnis pulchritudo rerum conditarum afficere cor humanum potest; satiare non potest, nisi sola illa dulcedo ad quam factum est. Nam species rerum visibilium quasi venae tantummodo quaedam sunt, per quas invisibilis pulchritudo se manifestans ad nos usque emanat (PL 175, col. 142D).

[206] *De vanitate mundi* (hereafter *De vanitate*) I: 'quia mundum iam universum coram me constitutum aspicio' in *Hugo von St. Viktor, Soliloquium de arrha animae* und *De vanitate mundi* (Book One and Two), ed. by Karl Müller, Kleine Texte für Vorlesungen und Übungen, 123 (Bonn: A. Marcus und E. Weber, 1913) pp. 26–48 (p. 28, l. 5); PL 176, col. 704D. On this 'vision cosmique' see Sicard, *Diagrammes médiévaux*, pp. 236–238. I have been unable to consult Cédric Giraud, *Le De vanitate mundi d'Hugues de Saint-Victor († 1141). Édition critique et commentaire* (forthcoming).

desire. If vanity extends beyond the present, so does desire. Hugh halts here to consider the nature of this desire, which implies unattainability on earth:

> What feeling is this where the thing is loved but its presence is not loved? Who can explain to my heart what that love is? I know that I love you, but I do not want you to return. And maybe I do not want you to return, because I would rather be there where you are. […] I am in exile, you are in the fatherland, and therefore I never tire to think of you, because by memory and recollection of you I somehow in my mind hasten back to the fatherland. How sweet is it, in a strange land to remember the past. The mind is not saturated by its desire, it follows the path of those who have gone, it sees inside the way it passes through, it sees the end to which it is striving, sees the place where it will arrive, sees the harbour where it will rest.[207]

The soul has now understood the vanity of transitory things, their very instability provoking its desire of future things.[208] It is convinced that it is best to escape from here and seek a more certain place. But where, it asks, shall we go outside this world so we can remain stable when all things in the world are changing? As reason explains: this world is like a flood, where men are shipwrecked, caught in transitory things:

> Consider man's mind, as it were in the middle, by the excellence of his creation transcending the world of mutability, but not able to reach the domain of the unchangeable. […] If the mind by its cupidity immerses itself in the transitory world, it is immediately caught by countless distractions and, divided from itself, is scattered.[209]

The mind can, however, learn to collect itself again and be at one with itself. The more it leaves the lower things behind and elevates itself in thought and desire, the

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[207] *De vanitate* II: 'Quis est affectus iste tam extraneus, tam inauditus, ubi res diligitur, et eius praesentia non amatur? Quis explicet cordi meo, quae sit ista dilectio? Scio quidem quia diligo te, neque tamen volo ut revertaris ad me. Et ideo fortassis redire te nolo, quia ibi potius ubi tu es tecum esse desidero. […] Ego in exilio sum, tu in patria es, et idcirco cogitare de te nunquam fastidio, quia per memoriam et recordationem tui quodammodo mente ad patriam recurro. O quam dulce est in terra aliena praeteritorum meminisse! Non saturatur mens desiderio, sequitur praeteritorum semitam, videt intus viam qua transeat, videt finem quo tendat, videt locum quo perveniat, videt portum ubi requiescat' (Müller, p. 38, ll. 2–16; PL 176, cols 712D–713A).

[208] *De vanitate* II: 'Rapior affectu et trahor desiderio quo currunt omnia; et iam nunc in rebus hoc ipsum, quod transeunt, diligo, quia ex ipsa mutatione et exemplo universorum ad transeundum hinc amplius inardesco' (Müller, p. 38, ll. 20–23; PL 176, col. 713A).

[209] *De vanitate* II: 'Deinde considera humanum animum quasi in quodam medio collocatum, qui quadam conditionis suae excellentia et huic quae deorsum est, mutabilitati supereminet et ad illam quae sursum est apud Deum veram immutabilitatem nondum pertingat. […] Si autem animus his, quae deorsum transeunt, se per cupiditatem immerserit, statim per infinitas distractiones rapitur et a semetipso quodammodo divisus dissipatur' (Müller, p. 39, ll. 10–18; PL 176, col. 713CD).

more it collects itself, until it achieves the true and only immutability which is with God. The soul admires the three things which reason then proposes: the world of ever changing things as a flood or a sea below; in the middle the human heart, which tries to gather itself in one, as an ark on the sea; and above it all in the third place, God, as steersman and anchor and harbour.

Ascending to God is, in fact, to enter into oneself, and not only to enter in oneself, but also to transcend oneself.[210] Indeed, Hugh again echoes what he had discussed more elaborately in *De archa morali*: 'If one lifts one's desire, away from the love of the present, to eternal things, and by self-reflection brings one's thoughts together to oneself […] one spiritually represents a certain shape of an ark expressed in oneself.'[211] The materials for the ark are man's own thoughts, and a survey of salvation history is included in the third and fourth books of *De vanitate*, offering the reader the substance for his thoughts.[212] This begins with the question of God's eternity, through the course of history up till the great saints, such as Gregory the Great, Benedict, and Saint Martin, culminating in an evocation of the heavenly Jerusalem: 'All this is the image of the heavenly Jerusalem on earth, to which those ascend well through the grades of virtue, who through emulation in the present are brought together to true peace and eternal stability in all their desires.'[213] With this evocation of stability and concentration of desire the circle of man's unrest is completed. If, for the reader, multiplicity starts all over again, he might turn to Hugh's *Homilies on the Ecclesiast*.

The Unrest of the Human Heart

Central to the *Homiliae in Salomonis Ecclesiasten* is the same human unrest of which Hugh wrote in his Introduction to *De archa*, and he offers the same remedy:

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[210] *De vanitate* II: 'Ascendere ergo ad Deum, hoc est intrare ad semetipsum, et non solum ad se intrare, sed ineffabili quodam modo in intimis etiam seipsum transire' (Müller, p. 41, ll. 15–17; PL 176, col. 715B).

[211] *De vanitate* II: 'Si vero sursum se ab amore praesentium per desiderium erexerit aeternorum ac per considerationem propriam cogitationes suas ad semetipsum collegerit, iam quodammodo fluctibus rerum superenatat et cuncta transitoria quasi subterlabentia calcat atque in eo quod se paulatim per gradus virtutum magis semper ac magis et sursum erigit et in unum colligit, quandam arcae formam spiritualiter in se expressam repraesentat' (Müller, p. 42, ll. 8–15; PL 176, cols 715d–716A).

[212] For 'thought' as material see also Sicard, *Diagrammes médiévaux*, pp. 214–215.

[213] *De vanitate mundi* IV: 'Hoc enim totum imago est Hierusalem coelestis in terra, ad quam bene in gradibus virtutum ascenditur ab iis qui praesenti aemulatione ad veram pacem, stabilitatemque aeternam totis desideriis colliguntur' (PL 176, col. 739B).

All things pass and flow and not a thing subsists under the sun, that the sentence is fulfilled: *vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity*. Indeed in that also is fulfilled the vanity that man's very heart cannot remain in the same state but, always different from itself and against itself and a stranger outside itself, it always moves away from what it is into that which it is not, and it passes, and is caught by utter vanity, either from vain things to true things, or from true things to vain things, everywhere vain and unstable, now striving for the highest, now plunging into the lowest, now approving of truth, then again preferring vanity. And we see now that utter vacillation of the human mind, contemplating in one man the whole human race.[214]

In countless repetitions, transience and fluctuations flow through Hugh's text, illustrating, on the level of the text, the endless effort in which the reader is involved. Hugh summarizes the goal and the nature of the meditative enterprise thus: 'The words of the Ecclesiast are sweet because when the misery of our exile is described, our mind awakens and sees the height from which it has fallen and, even when it cannot recover that height, longs for it with a marvellous ardent inner desire'.[215] As man has forgotten his origin, man's thought has become 'a fugitive and a vagabond'[216] alienated from his self. When the Ecclesiast says: 'I considered in my heart to abstain from wine, to transfer my mind to wisdom and avoid folly, until I would see what is useful for the sons of man, what they need under the sun all the days of their life (Ecclesiastes 2. 3)', this points, Hugh explains, to man's fundamental *aversio* and the resulting ignorance even about his own position. With typical exegetical flexibility, the story of Adam hiding in paradise is employed, and traces of Cain's story also resonate, as well as the lyrics of wisdom, in the hide and seek between man and truth:

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[214] *In Eccles*. XII: 'Transeunt enim omnia et fluunt, et non subsistit quidquam sub sole, ut impleatur sententia: *Vanitas vanitatum, vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas*. Completur etenim in eo quoque vanitas quod, et ipsum cor hominis in eodem statu non permanet, sed semper a se alterum et sibi adversum atque extra se peregrinum, ab eo semper quod est elongat in id quod non est; et transit, et rapitur maxima vanitate, sive de vanis ad vera, sive de veris ad vana, ubique vanum et instabile, nunc summa appetens, nunc se in infima demergens. Illic approbans veritatem; hic anteponens vanitatem. Et videmus nunc fluctuationem istam maximam mentis humanae in uno homine universum genus hominum contemplantes' (PL 175, col. 204BC).

[215] *In Eccles*. II: 'Verba Ecclesiastes […] nescio quo pacto, modo cum legerentur dulcia facta sunt in auribus nostris […] Mens enim nostra in auditu malorum suorum quasi de quodam somno pristini temporis evigilans subito agnovit ubi esset […] simul etiam considerare caepit de quanta sublimitate in hoc ipsum miseriae profundum cecidisset, et ad illam quia necdum effectu potuit miro quodam ardoris intimi desiderio suspiravit. Hoc ergo erat quod in illis verbis, quae nostram recitabant miseriam, nostrum traxit affectum' (PL 175, cols. 133BC–CD).

[216] For example *In Eccles*. V: 'Unde bene illic dicitur, fagus (*sic*) et profugus' (PL 175, col. 156D).

O human heart, where are you? How have you come to this point, where you do not know what is useful for the sons of men, what is necessary for you under the sun, all the days of your life? Where are you that you do not know this? Where are you, Adam? Where are you? I have heard, he says, your voice and I hid myself.[217]

The excursion which follows revolves around the 'where are you', *ubi es*, unmasking the meaning of hiddenness, shifting the roles between Adam/reader and truth from which he is hiding. 'O hidden one, where are you? How far are you? And how close are you?'[218] Adam, that is the reader, has hidden himself and is far from truth, not knowing where he has come from and where to return, while truth follows him:

Now you are hidden from truth, concealed under the shadow of your ignorance; because you have receded far away and you have declined to be with her, without whom you cannot be. […] Understand then that you in this are not hidden anymore; because she follows you while you are fleeing away and forces herself upon her adversary and teaches, to him to whom she does not let herself to be seen, that she is to be sought. […] Thus it is said to you: Adam where are you, so that you turn to truth and find truth. You did not want to stay in truth; at least return to truth, because you cannot stay outside truth. A vagabond and a fugitive you will be, and unstable, all the days that you are not with her and in her, and your heart will not find where to rest if it does not want to stay in her […] Groping, not seeing, you move vainly in the wrong direction, looking for truth where she is not. And you, where are you? She is inside, and you are outside, and thus she calls you and says: Adam where are you? […] Why are you silent? Call her while she goes away, follow her fleeing: because she is still near and waits whether she may be called back. […] While man is fleeing truth, truth follows him as he flees although she leaves him as he separates himself. While she turns away from him doing evil, she recalls him as he persists in his iniquity. Where are you Adam? Thus, she says, I know where you are; you do not know.[219]

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[217] *In Eccles*. VIII: 'O cor humanum, ubi es? quomodo huc venisti, ut hoc nescias quid utile sit filiis hominum, quo facto opus est sub sole numero dierum vitae suae? Ubi es ut hoc ignores? *Ubi es Adam, ubi es? Audivi*, inquit, *vocem tuam et abscondi me*' (PL 175, col. 165D).

[218] *In Eccles*. VIII: 'O abscondite, cui abscondisti te? O abscondite, ubi es? Quam longe es? et quam prope es?' (PL 175, cols 165D–166A).

[219] *In Eccles*. V: 'sed nunc absconditus es a veritate, latens sub umbra ignorantiae tuae; quia recessisti longe et noluisti cum illa esse, sine qua esse non potes. […] Intellige ergo te vel in hoc prorsus non esse absconditum; quia illa fugientem sequitur atque adverso se ingerit, ac quaerendam docet cui se videndam non praebet. […] Ideo dicitur tibi: Adam, ubi es! ut ad veritatem redeas, et invenias veritatem. Noluisti stare in veritate; modo redi ad veritatem, quia stare non potes extra veritatem. Vagus, et profugus, et instabilis eris omnibus diebus quibus cum ipsa et in ipsa non fueris, nec inveniet cor tuum ubi requiescat, se (*sic*) in ipsa stare noluerit […] Palpando et non videndo frustra ex adverso incedis, quaerens veritatem ubi non est. Et tu ubi es? Illa intus es (*sic*), et tu foris es; et ideo clamat tibi, et dicit: Adam ubi es? […] quare siles? Voca discedentem, sequere fugientem: quoniam adhuc prope est et exspectat

The endlessly repeated theme 'where are you' comes to a close when the reader is returned to the role of the Ecclesiast, and reminded once again to concentrate:

> You have done well, to have planned to keep your flesh from wine, that wisdom may better inebriate your soul, and you may gather her to herself inside: where wisdom shines, where truth is known, and prudence is found. For this also is avoiding foolishness, not to pour oneself out into empty and vain things, but to contain under reason's control the mind's whole attention and all the heart's efforts and to bring them in harmony with truth.[220]

The multiplicity of desire which is at the heart of the matter, is, says Hugh, reflected in man's speech, as illustrated in the manifold assertions of the Ecclesiast. This multiplicity is inevitable, and is canalized in the text of the Ecclesiast as Hugh presents it, and in his exegesis of it. This exegesis shows once more the tediousness of man's desires, entangled as they are in the confusion between the eternal and the temporal:

> Many are man's discourses, because man's heart is not one. For if inside the mind had not scattered itself in many desires, away from the fountain of truth, outside speech would not at all spread through so many assertions. Now, however, since the mind, as the ruler, is separated from the love of virtue by various desires into the avidity for vanity, as a witness of that same vanity its speech serves it outside in its shifting and unstable judgement. That is why Solomon, discussing vanity, so often changes the meaning in his discourse, so as to show, obviously, how thinking changes its sense by the love of vanity. For the human heart that is not fastened in the desire for eternity can never be stable; because through the heat of its carnal desires it is shaken from its stability as often as it is moved away from the things to which it had attached itself, to desire other things.[221]

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si forte revocetur […] Sequitur fugientem quae deseruit discedentem. Quae aversa est iniqua facientem, revocat iniquitate persistentem. Adam ubi es? Ergo, inquit, scio ubi es; tu nescis' (PL 175, cols 166B–167D).

[220] *In Eccles*. V: 'Bene in hoc fecisti, quod abstrahere proposuisti a vino carnem tuam, ut melius inebriares sapientia animan (*sic*) tuam, et eam ad semetipsam introrsum colligeres: ubi sapientia lucet, ubi veritas cognoscitur, et prudentia invenitur. Nam, et hoc ipsum erat devitare stuetitiam (*sic*), non se ad inania, et vana appetenda effundere; sed totam animi intentionem omnesque cordis conatus sub rationis moderamine cohibendo veritati conformare' (PL 175, col. 168D).

[221] *In Eccles*. XIII: 'Multi sunt sermones hominis, quia cor hominis unum non est. Nisi enim prius mens a fonte veritatis introrsum se per multa desideria spargeret, nequaquam sermo foris per tam multas se assertiones derivaret. Nunc autem quia animus rector ab amore virtitutis (*sic*) per varia desideria in concupiscentiam vanitatis scinditur: idcirco in approbatione ejusdem vanitatis vario ei inconstantique judicio lingua foris per verbum famulatur. Propterea ergo Salomon de vanitate disputans, toties in sermone sententiam mutat, ut videlicet sensum in cogitatione per amorem vanitatis mutatum ostendat. Cor namque humanum quod in desiderio aeternitatis fixum non est, nunquam stabile esse valet; quoniam

Looking for the usufruct of eternity in things which can only offer temporary relief, finding only either false joy or real misery instead, man always wants something else. This fluctuation of the mind is what the Ecclesiast represents in his own person.[222]

After experiencing the vanity of all his endeavours so far, the Ecclesiast finally comes to see that the strong mind not only takes the good things of this world as a consolation, but also accepts adversity as a way to practise virtue—in short, he accepts that there is a time for everything. No wonder man cannot find something stable, as everything in this world is subject to temporality, and, with it, fragility, and things are really 'only wandering in true being, and, in the very passage in which they are running, are seen to participate in being which they do not catch or comprehend, although they seem to touch it, so as not to be completely nothing.'[223]

On the level of Hugh's literary performance the dispersion is integrated. It has been made part of the inherent complexity of existence, and is in itself a reminder of man's exile. That becomes clear in Hugh's exegesis of the text that there is 'a time to cast away stones, and to gather stones together' (Ecclesiastes 3. 5):

> The whole world is a place of exile for those for whom heaven should have been the fatherland: but nevertheless the minds of mortals strike root through use, and they begin to love their places, and the land in which they were born, or were brought up; and what follows is a great oblivion of eternal things replaced by the desire for temporary things: and unless God would rub off those inveterate sweet sentiments, the desire for him would have no entrance in us. Therefore he gives his judgements, and races are unsettled and shaken up, and you have migrations of peoples: […] so that man sees that there is no stable dwelling here, and slowly becomes accustomed to abstract and loosen his mind from the bonds of earthly things.[224]

That is why there is a time to cast away stones, so man in his exile will long for the fatherland. However, as human weakness cannot endure adversity for long, after the

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aestu desideriorum carnalium toties a sua stabilitate concutitur, quoties ab iis quibus per amorem inhaeserat, ad alia concupiscenda movetur' (PL 175, cols 204D–205A).

[222] *In Eccles*. XIII: 'Hanc ergo fluctuationem mentis humanae hactenus nobis Ecclesiastes in semetipso expressit' (PL 175, col. 205C).

[223] *In Eccles*. XIII: 'Ita sunt ista in vero esse errantia, et participare videntur in ipso transitu in quo currunt, esse quod non capiunt nec comprehendunt, licet attingere videantur, ne omnino nihil sint'(PL 175, col. 208AB).

[224] *In Eccles*. XV: 'Omnis mundus exsilium est iis quibus coelum patria esse debuisset: sed tamen animi mortalium usu coalescunt, et incipiunt homines diligere loca sua, et terras suas in quibus nati fuerant, vel nutriti; et succedit grandis oblivio aeternorum pro temporalium affectu: et nisi Deus tergeret istas passionum inolitas suavitates, non erat quo intraret ad nos desiderium ejus. Propterea dat judicia sua, et veniunt commotiones, et concussiones gentium, et transmigrationes populorum: […] ut videat homo non esse hic stabilem mansionem, et assuescat paulatim abstrahere animum, et solvere a vinculis terrenarum delectationum' (PL 175, col. 221CD).

time of casting away stones, there is again a time to gather them together, so that human weakness recovers and enjoys a premonition of the joys of future rest.[225] Many other times follow, and the whole cycle of times is repeated once more in another round of exegesis, according to spiritual understanding. If only man had persisted in obedience (thus the world before the Fall resonates once again) he would not be subject to transience. But the result of his fall is that man, who surrendered himself to mutability, has lost tranquillity, and fluctuation and inconstancy have eventuated.[226] At this level the time for the casting away stones and the time to gather them together refer to the works of virtue: the casting away points to multiplication of good works, while the gathering corresponds to enjoying the fruit of work in contemplation.[227]

In the end, it is not the changeable things themselves which are the problem, but man's changing judgements: 'In itself it was good, that transitory things change their appearance over time, but it was not good that the judgements of the human mind abandoned truth.'[228] It is to this state of affairs that Hugh adjusts his exposition. What he says about the biblical author using his literary skills could apply to his own exposition as well: 'All these things he demonstrates, and he forms his narrative hither and thither, so as to follow the minds of men, because in this way they themselves waver, and fluctuate in the uncertainty of dark life.'[229]

The biblical texts of the Ecclesiast, as well as Hugh's meditations on them—lingering on the words even when they appear to be clear—are meant to provoke the reader into the right *affectus*: away from the world, even though this is achieved partly by contemplation (via the text) of wordly things.[230] Thus, in the very

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[225] *In Eccles*. XV: 'ut quiete temporis convalescat in hoc ipso admonita sapere, et experiri quanta sint gaudia venturae quietis; ut ad illam festinet ubi timor dispersionis non est, neque exsilii aerumna metuitur, quibus aeternitas vitae in patria data est' (PL 175, cols 221D–222A). Compare *In Eccles*. XIX: 'Sed considera et agnosce te sub sole esse, ubi volvuntur omnia et confusa sunt universa, quoniam ideo hoc factum est ut agnoscas exsilium tuum, et patriam requiras aliam' (PL 175, col. 253A).

[226] *In Eccles*. XVI: 'ut ille quoque qui se per amorem mutabilibus subdidit, lege aliorum suae mutabilitatis fluctibus agitatus, quietus stare non possit' (PL 175, col. 228AB).

[227] *In Eccles*. XVI (PL 175, col. 230AB).

[228] *In Eccles*. XVII: 'Non enim nocuisset mutabilitas rerum, si animorum mutabilitas non fuisset: quoniam idipsum bonum erat, ut transitoria pro tempore mutent speciem, sed non erat bonum ut judicia mentium humanarum deserant vertitatem. Non itaque causamur quod tempora varia sunt, quoniam bonum est: sed causamur quod varia sunt humana judicia: quoniam hoc bonum non est' (PL 175, col. 237A).

[229] *In Eccles*. XVIII: 'Haec omnia demonstrat iste, et format narrationem suam huc et illuc, ut sequatur mentes hominum, quoniam in hunc modum ipsae nutant, et fluctuant in incerto vitae caliginosae' (PL 175, col. 251C).

[230] Compare *In Eccles*. I: 'Caeterum sciendum est hunc librum novum quoddam expositionis genus requirere; quia cum totus ad commovendos affectus cordis humani

beginning, the earth, as it 'abideth forever while generations pass away' (Ecclesiastes 1. 4) became the point of departure for a meditative exercise, in which the earth's stability, providing consolation for man, was contrasted with human instability. Although cursed as man is cursed, the earth still carries man: 'the cursed carries the cursed. And yet she carries', *Et tamen portat*.[231]

The emphasis is on the vanity of it all. Nevertheless, the tension alluded to above is present here as well. The world is vanity but, at the same time, it is instrumental in man's restoration in becoming the object of man's contemplation—just as it is in *De vanitate* and in *De archa*: contemplation of its vanity as well as of God's ordering. The endless circle of development and decay of the elements in nature shows how all is vanity, but there is some reason in the madness. Divine wisdom has provided that

> corporeal nature returns continually to its origin, and continuously receives what it expends, and without decreasing expends what it receives, and there is decreasing without decrease; and never there is a lack of matter to decrease, so it ever decreases. Thus in one and the same thing it is miserable that it is; and it is marvellous that it has been made, wherefor in the same work one finds fragile matter, and the reason of the maker. [...] After having completed his tour of changing things, the Ecclesiast turns himself to look into this reason, so that he exercises his mind's sharpness in that reason through contemplation; as he cannot comprehend her sufficiently by knowledge, he strives to venerate her in worthy admiration.[232]

Apart from provoking admiration for the divine order in things, the world is instrumental on a second level, although at this level it leaves man as unfulfilled as ever. As we saw earlier, in his *In Hierarchiam coelestem* Hugh argued that the

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intendat, saepius in eo quasi colloquendo quam exponendo sermonem formare oportet. Unde necesse est in iis etiam aliquando, quae plana et aperta videntur, diutius verbis immorari, ut ipsa locutionis inculcatio validius tangat et efficacius penetret cor audientis' (PL 175, col. 133AB). On the special exegetical requirements to which Hugh refers, see Van Zwieten, 'The Place and Significance of Literal Exegesis in Hugh of St. Victor', p. 7.

[231] *In Eccles*. I: 'Ergo maledicta maledictos portat. Et tamen portat' (PL 175, col. 131C). Compare *De archa* II, 3, where the elements appeal to man: 'Terra dicit: "Ego te porto"' (Sicard, p. 38, ll. 14–15).

[232] *In Eccles*. II: 'Dei enim sapientia, ut jam dictum est, hoc mirabiliter providit, ut rerum omnium motus in orbem ageretur, quatenus corporea natura, quae effluendo aliquando defectum sentire potuisset, semper in suam recurrendo originem dum sine intermissione recipit quod effudit, sine defectu effundat quod recepit, et sit defectus sine defectu; nec unquam desit quod possit deficere, ut semper deficiat. Unde in una eademque re, et miserum est, quod est; et mirabile quod factum est, quia in eodem opere et fragilis invenitur materia, et ratio artificis admiranda. [...] Ad hanc ergo rationem intuendam post explicitum cursum rerum multabilium (*sic*) noster Ecclesiastes se convertit ut in ea mentis aciem per contemplationem exerceat; qui eam scientia sufficienter non valet comprehendere, digna studet venerari admiratione' (PL 175, col. 139C).

visible things of the world are also signs that lead to the invisible world. When the Ecclesiast says: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing (Ecclesiastes 1. 8) Hugh explains that it is so 'because through these senses the beauty of the visible things, while it affects the mind in delight at the contemplation of itself, kindles in it an indescribable desire for the invisible good'.[233] However, this desire is excited rather than fulfilled. 'From the appearance of visible things the rational mind conceives as it were only some seeds of joy; but growing boundless it soon labours in its desire, and cannot hold itself in so much delight.'[234] The world and the human heart are mutually and endlessly inadequate: the heart can never explain all the difficult things of the world, the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. The joy of the world can affect man, but all its joys cannot satiate him: the appearances of visible things are 'the veins through which the invisible beauty pours down'.[235] From this perspective, the endless explanations and digressions, this overproduction or excess of meaning, not only reflect man's lack of concentration. The surfeit of explanations and digressions exemplify the same paradox as the multiplicity of visible things: in all their diversity, they point to the one beauty and truth.

After his consideration of the visible world, its beauty as well as its vanity, Hugh's Ecclesiast turns to contemplate wisdom. Here Hugh evokes the Wisdom of Solomon—*Sapientia* 'reaching from one end of the world to the other, and ordering all things well' (*attingens a fine usque ad finem fortiter, et disponens omnia suaviter*, Wisdom of Solomon 8. 1). He then explores wisdom's all-embracing nature in a long digression in which the cosmology of *In Hierarchiam coelestem* resonates. In *In Ecclesiasten*, even more than in the Dionysian commentary, this wisdom is the counterpoint of a fundamental fragility. Wisdom is everywhere. 'Starting from the top downwards, descending from the highest to the bottom of things, she accompanies and cherishes all that she has made, so that these things do

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[233] *In Eccles*. II: 'Dicat ergo Ecclesiastes: Non saturatur oculus visu nec auris impletur auditu. Quia per hos sensus, visibilium pulchritudo, dum animum jucunditate in sui contemplatione afficit, inenarrabilem in eo concupiscentiam invisibilium bonorum accendit' (PL 175, cols 141D–142A).

[234] *In Eccles*. II: 'A specie enim visibilium rerum, quasi quaedam tantummodo rationalis animus semina concipit gaudiorum; sed excrescente mox in immensum desiderio parturit ipse et non se capit in tanta jucunditate' (PL 175, col. 142A).

[235] *In Eccles*. II: 'Omnis jucunditas, omnis suavitas, omnis pulchritudo rerum conditarum afficere cor humanum potest; satiare non potest, nisi sola illa dulcedo ad quam factum est. Nam species rerum visibilium quasi venae tantummodo quaedam sunt, per quas invisibilis pulchritudo se manifestans ad nos usque emanat' (PL 175, col. 142D).

not subsist without her that have been made and created by her.'[236] There is an echo of truth pursuing the fleeing Adam, when Wisdom follows the flight of things:

> From the supreme heaven to the lowest part in all the things that subsist, all the single things, the more they degenerate from the perfect beauty and the fully achieved elegance of the highest things, the more they as it were flee and move away from Wisdom. But she, Wisdom, follows the flight of things from one end to the other (*Sed ipsa Sapientia fugam rerum a fine usque finem sequitur*), because in all things that she made she deserts nothing totally, but sets a measure of beauty proper and fitting for each in its sort to all single things from the highest to the lowest and thus demonstrates itself to be present also in these things.[237]

This arrangement encompasses evil, which can only exist in existing things and has no substance of itself; it is only a corruption of the good, permitted because, by comparison, wisdom appears the more beautiful.[238] *Currit ergo sapientia ...*: 'Thus Wisdom runs, to reach from one end to the other, transcending evil in the uncorrupted good where malice does not have access, pursuing it in those things that are corrupted, where malice does not prevail.'[239]

The tension between the visible world as vanity and as sign of the invisible, of Wisdom pursuing everything and the fragility of everything, finds a solution in *In Hierarchiam coelestem* and *De sacramentis* in Hugh's cosmology of participation and history of salvation. Although these solutions resonate in *In Ecclesiasten*, this commentary shows, even more than *De sacramentis* and the Dionysian Commentary, how fragility is drawn beyond the level of cosmological and historical considerations into the literary texture and the reading experience, as a poetic image (the earth may be cursed, *et tamen portat*; things may flee away from being, but Wisdom runs after them; *Sed ipsa Sapientia fugam rerum a fine usque ad finem*

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[236] *In Eccles*. XI: 'Incipiens enim a summo deorsum, et a supremo usque ad fundum rerum descendens, comitatur ac fovet cuncta quae operata est, ut non subsistant sine ipsa quae facta et creata sunt ab ipsa' (PL 175, col. 185A).

[237] *In Eccles*. XI: 'A supremo autem usque ad infimum in universis quae subsistunt, singula quaeque quanto magis a perfecta pulchritudine consummatoque decore summorum degenerant, tanto magis quasi fugentia quodammodo a sapientia elongant. Sed ipsa Sapientia fugam rerum a fine usque ad finem sequitur; quia in universis, quae fecit nihil ex toto deserens, singula quaeque a summis usque ad infima proprio convenientique suo generi decore moderando: his quoque se praesentem esse testatur' (PL 175, col. 185AB).

[238] *In Eccles*. XI: 'Malum enim propriam sedem non habet, sed natura peregrinum a suo, in alieno commoratur, ut constet quod non est in suo; quia si bona non essent in quibus mala essent, mala omnino non essent. Cum enim malum aliud non sit, quam boni corruptio […] Non enim Sapientia malitiam fecit; sed in eo quod fecit, malitiam esse permisit, ut collata malitiae Sapientia vinceret, et comparata pulchrior appareret' (PL 175, col. 188AB).

[239] *In Eccles*. XI: 'Currit ergo sapientia, ut attingat a fine usque ad finem transcendens malitiam in incorruptis bonis, quo malitia non accedit: et consequens malitiam in iis, quae corrupta sunt, quo malitia non praecedit' (PL 175, col. 188C).

sequitur). Such an image defies solution and yet, far from causing a break, it really holds the reader's world together.

Conclusion

For Hugh of Saint-Victor, the *homo interior* is a natural part of man's self-interpretation. Unlike Peter Damian, Hugh does not emphasize the contrast between inner and outer. The inner does not need to be reclaimed from the outer world; there may be a tension, but in a comprehensive pedagogy the inner is related to the outer world. In his *Institutio Novitiorum* Hugh showed how inner and outer are intimately linked on the personal level, as the reader aspires to achieve a correspondence between his outer and his inner behaviour. Hugh's view of the reader's development is embedded in a wider project of learning and its salvationary effects, to which he showed the way in the *Didascalicon*. It is also rooted in his cosmology and his vision of salvation history, not only because they show man's place in the world, but because, when read on a tropological level, cosmology and history reveal how one can build one's inner person. From the latter perspective, there is no such thing as a tragic but simple story of creation, fall and redemption. Even apart from the repeatedly stated priority of *reparatio* over *creatio*, the pre-lapsarian state of innocence was just that: an acknowledgement of a moral neutrality, which somehow lacks reality. Without ever denying the role of grace, Hugh pointed to the role of free will and choice as identifying man's humanity—and his 'in between' position. The inevitable failure and the alienation from man's origin, as well as the effort to find the way back, inform Hugh's works on the ark as well as his great meditations on vanity in *De vanitate* and in his Homilies on the Ecclesiast.

In Hugh's works ambiguity and nothingness, rooted as they are in the world as it is, give depth of field to the reader forming his self. The simultaneity of the cosmic dimension of existence and the permanent threat of a return to nothingness is a recurring obsession of monastic life. For all its concomitant dullness, this is living on the edges. But although the insecure character of life, the possibility of jeopardizing it at any moment, is recognized in an earlier tradition, with Hugh this ambiguity is not only indicative of insecurity but also of a continuous open-endedness: of the possibility which comes with insecurity, rather than of the insecurity itself. As a *felix culpa*, Eve's doubt and ill-directed desire for interpretation are, after all, only reflections of the questioning and interpreting that inform Hugh's, and his reader's work.[240]

Hugh of Saint Victor can be seen as a thinker and writer on the crossroads of various developments, combining Augustinian and Dionysian elements for example, and especially of developments in the character of theology, a word which only

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[240] See *De arrha anime* on *felix culpa* (Feiss and Sicard, pp. 258–260).

started to receive its modern definition in Hugh's time. Theology had been mainly, though not exclusively, an exegetical affair during the preceding ages. Hugh is following this tradition. He has contributed to the development of exegesis on what would become a more scholastic level, by his emphasis on literal exegesis as the foundation of the other levels of interpretation.[241] At the same time, theology became a more systematic discipline, for which Hugh's *De sacramentis* was one of the early examples, resulting in the later *Summae*. In the period after him the theology of the schools was detached from sacred history and its exegesis. Historical exegesis on the one hand, allegory on the other hand, began to develop independently from each other.[242] During the course of the twelfth century, the third level, of tropological exegesis, would retreat to the monasteries, to develop into independent treatises on the religious life, or guides to the contemplative life. Richard of Saint-Victor, whose work I shall discuss in the next chapter, develops the full potential of tropology. Hugh still managed to hold the various aspects together. With his analysis and hermeneutics of reading and exegesis, meditation and prayer, and their application in his own exegetical and meditative writings, he lent support to the reader recreating his inner self by involvement in the reading process. If his analysis left the door open for a more 'instrumental' use of his writings—as for example in his *De meditatione*, which the reader could use as a manual for meditation—for Hugh the different levels of exegesis, of for example *De sacramentis*, were just that: different readings of what was one object,[243] illuminating the different levels at which the reader had to realize his existence in this the present life, in this world in between, where 'the time is long, the place is difficult, but the remedy is adequate'.[244]

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[241] See Berndt, 'Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Exegese und Theologie'; Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952, repr. 1984); Van Zwieten, 'The Place and Significance of Literal Exegesis in Hugh of St. Victor'. On the development of theology as a scholarly discipline see Richard Heinzelmann, 'Die Entwicklung der Theologie zur Wissenschaft', in *Aufbruch-Wandel-Erneuerung. Beiträge zur "Renaissance" des 12. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Georg Wieland, 9. Blaubeurer Symposium vom 9. bis 11. Oktober 1992 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1995), pp. 123–138.

[242] de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, III, 418–435.

[243] Sicard, *Diagrammes médiévaux*, p. 169.

[244] *De sacramentis* I, VIII, 1 (PL 176, cols 305D–306C; trans. Deferrari, p. 142).

Richard of Saint-Victor:
Exegesis and the Inner Man

Richard of Saint-Victor (according to the little we know about his life from a seventeenth-century historian of Saint-Victor, Jean de Toulouse) was probably born in England, though the precise date is unknown.[1] He entered Saint-Victor during the abbacy of Gilduin (1114–1155), probably before 1141, as he seems to have known Hugh, who died in that year. In manuscripts he is often called *magister*, and he certainly was sub-prior in 1159, and then prior from 1161. His works clearly show his pedagogical role. He died (again according to Jean de Toulouse) on the 10th of March 1173.

The developments in biblical learning, as sketched at the end of the last chapter, led to a parting of the ways between that which later became known as theology and an alternative approach characterized by a mainly tropological exegesis. Richard of Saint-Victor is usually regarded as part of the tropological–exegetical heritage.[2] But it would be wrong to claim too clear a separation between these two tendencies in this period. Richard certainly builds on Hugh's ideas about exegesis and its role in composing the inner self, such as Hugh had elaborated in *De archa* for example. For Richard however, more than for Hugh, exegesis and composition tend to be telescoped within each other: exegesis resulting in composing one's person; composing one's person consisting of following the exegesis of a text—an exegesis exploited to its limits. More than the other authors considered in this book, Richard offers his readers an exegetical narrative which enables them to reconstruct, after the model of this narrative, a coherent inner life, and which also shows how incoherence will remain inevitable.

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[1] Jean Châtillon, art. 'Richard de Saint-Victor', *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, XIII (Paris: Beauchesne, 1988), cols 593–654.

[2] de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, III, 429.

Following a subdivision made by Jean Châtillon, Richard's works range from biblical commentaries (*Liber exceptionum, In Apocalypsim*) and theology (*De Trinitate, Ad me clamat ex Seir*) to sermons and treatises on the spiritual and contemplative life, the latter often in the form of biblical exegesis as well (*Benjamin minor, Benjamin maior, De statu interioris hominis, De exterminatione mali et promotione boni, De eruditione interioris hominis*).[3] What such a distinction may obscure, though, is the overall coherence of purpose in Richard's *oeuvre*, just as in the work of Hugh of Saint-Victor. In many of his works Richard takes a biblical text or image as his point of departure and then proceeds to explain all its different meanings, alluding to other biblical texts, digressing on their meaning, before returning to his central point. Richard presents the biblical text as a starting point from which the reader, participating in the reconstruction of the text, will compose his thinking (*cogitationes*) and his feeling (*affectiones*) by mimetically following the text. In this way, Richard describes and guides the inner process. Sometimes he will emphasize the way to contemplation; at other times, the subject of contemplation. The process, made explicit in some of his works, is presupposed in others, which concentrate on the content. But process and content are never separate. *De Trinitate*, for example, may be regarded as Richard's most theological work. It offers insightful philosophical views on personhood. It is, at the same time, a guide to contemplation in the sense that, in one and the same text, it offers a recapitulation of the way to, and an elaboration of the highest object of, contemplation.[4] Pastoral questions with which Richard engages on a theological level (in *De spiritu blasphemiae*, for example) are connected to the possibility of despair, which is of central importance in his devotional writings. By contrast, Richard's *De archa mystica* or *Benjamin maior* and *De duodecim patriarchis* or *Benjamin minor*, which count as devotional works, have been suggested as being the first systematic treatment of mysticism.[5] It is true that, in these two works, Richard gives a

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[3] See Châtillon, 'Richard de Saint-Victor', cols 559–625. See also Pierluigi Cacciapuoti, *"Deus existentia amoris". Teologia della carità e teologia della trinità negli scritti di Riccardo di San Vittore († 1173)*, Bibliotheca Victorina, IX (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 50–52.

[4] See Nico Den Bok, *Communicating the Most High: A Systematic Study of Person and Trinity in the Theology of Richard of St. Victor († 1173)*, Bibliotheca Victorina, VII (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), p. 104, on using the metaphor of a pyramid.

[5] For example Joseph Ebner, *Die Erkenntnislehre Richards von St. Viktor*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters. Texte und Untersuchungen. Band XIX, Heft 4 (Münster i. W.: Verlag der Aschendorfschen Buchhandlung, 1917), p. 120: 'den Ruhm, die Mystik zuerst in ein System gebracht zu haben.' McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism*, discussing Richard together with Hugh (in his chapter 'The Victorine ordering of mysticism') writes about Richard's thought as 'a more systematic doctrine of contemplation than any other found in the twelfth century' (p. 399). See also M.-D. Chenu, 'La Mentalité symbolique', in Chenu, *La Théologie au douzième siècle*, pp. 159–190 (pp. 188–189); trans.

comprehensive view of the contemplative life and its stages. The many distinctions and listings in these and in his other works sometimes seem to halt the dynamic character of the narrative, threatening the engagement between reader and text, which is the condition for the reader's composition. They may have facilitated a later reading of his works as systematic treatises, containing a theory of mysticism, but, if 'mystical theory […] often helps create the possibility for certain forms of mystical consciousness',[6] it is important to remember that Richard's aim was not to give a theory, but to offer a literary model of the contemplative life. From this point of view—reading this work from within the perspective of twelfth-century monastic culture and not, as in later readings, as an itinerary of mystical experience—digressions and distinctions reflect the circuitous character of the monk's and canon's life, as was the case in Hugh's works. It is questionable whether mysticism is a term appropriate to Richard. He uses the word 'mystical' (*mysticus*) to refer to the interpretation of scripture, not to an independent field of experience for which his works could be taken as a manual.[7] Even his most 'mystical' treatise, *De quatuor gradibus violentae caritatis*, is determined by a monastic–exegetical mode.[8]

This chapter investigates what Richard's *contemplatio* implied and how it plays a role in the process of composing the *homo interior*. First, I shall outline Richard's exegetical principles. Then I shall explore some of his works separately, as they present various important aspects of Richard's view of this composing process.

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as 'The Symbolist Mentality' in Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society*, pp. 99–145 (pp. 141–144), Chenu arguing that the twelfth century saw the transition from metaphorically signifying to allegorically explicating and systematically explaining.

[6] Bernard McGinn, 'Ocean and Desert as Symbols of Absorption in the Christian Tradition', *Journal of Religion*, 74 (1994), 155–184 (p. 176).

[7] For the problems of terminology involved in speaking about mysticism (a word which was only coined in the eighteenth century) see Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, Volume One of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (London: SCM Press, 1992), pp. xiii–xx; Beckwith, *Christ's Body*, pp. 7–18. For the distinction between later medieval mysticism and twelfth-century epistemology, characterized as it was by its association with the Bible and its neo-Platonic–Augustinian background see Rainer Berndt, 'Visio-speculatio-contemplatio: zur Theorie der sehenden Wahrnemung bei Richard von Sankt Viktor', in *Hildegard von Bingen in ihrem Umfeld: Mystik und Visionsformen in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit. Katholizismus und Protestantismus im Dialog*, ed. by Änne Bäumer-Schleinkofer (Würzburg: Religion & Kultur-Verlag, 2001), pp. 137–160.

[8] See I. van ´t Spijker, 'Exegesis and Emotions: Richard of St.Victor's *De Quatuor Gradibus Violentae Caritatis*', *Sacris Eruditi. Jaarboek voor Godsdienstwetenschappen*, 36 (1996), 147–160.

An Introduction to Exegesis: the Liber exceptionum

For beginners, the fundamental principles as well as the basic material for the
process of exegetical composition are found in Richard's *Liber exceptionum*, or
Course Book.[9] As the title indicates, the *Liber exceptionum* is the fruit of teaching
practices. According to its editor, Jean Châtillon, it must have been written between
1153 and 1160, at the beginning of Richard's career as an author, but it presents the
same anthropological and epistemological ideas as later exegetical works. What Richard
offers his readers is really an encyclopaedia, in the tradition of Hugh's *Didascalicon*
or Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*: an overview of all important knowledge as
well as an epistemology. It begins with Richard explaining the origin of the *artes*. In
dealing with the arts—our way of knowing things—he mainly follows Hugh's
Didascalicon and its sources. After having revealed access via the *artes* to the world and
to the world of knowledge, but before setting out to further explore this world, a second
door to the world has to be opened. In the second book of Part One, Richard identifies
the subjects of secular and divine writings. Here Richard follows Hugh's *De
sacramentis*: it is through this double scripture, and especially through divine scripture
with its three levels for treating things—historical, allegorical and tropological—that we
know the world. Its geography is explained in the third book, where Richard mainly
follows Isidore of Sevilla. In the remaining books of Part One, history is summarized
starting from creation, according to a wholly traditional division and based partly on
Isidore, partly on Hugh of Fleury's *Chronicon*. In Part Two he presents the allegorical
and tropological meanings of this history across several short chapters, summarizing
all possible interpretations at the end of each chapter and employing a process of
circling around his subject that he will later exploit in his other works. The first
books of Part Two are Richard's own, but in Books Four to Nine he again borrows
much from standard authors such as Isidore, Gregory the Great, and Hrabanus Maurus,
via the *Glossa Ordinaria* (the running commentary to the biblical text which became
standardized in the twelfth century), and from his masters or contemporaries, Hugh of
Saint-Victor and Adam of Saint-Victor, among others.[10] In these books, Richard follows
the ordering of biblical history. From Book Ten onwards, it is solely Richard's work. In
Book Ten he presents a collection of sermons which were also later published as part of
his *Sermones centum*, and in the remaining books the allegorical exegesis is again in the
form of sermons. In this last part he addresses his readers as *fratres* or *fratres carissimi*

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[9] *Liber exceptionum*, ed. by Jean Châtillon, Textes philosphiques du Moyen Age, V (Paris:
Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1958). On the title see the introduction by Châtillon, p. 68.

[10] For the sources of the *Liber exceptionum* see Châtillon, *Liber exceptionum*, Introduction,
pp. 68–71.

more than once, in what seem to be exemplary sermons—a form particularly suited to those of his readers whose task it was to preach.[11]

According to Chenu the *Liber exceptionum* belongs to a type of literature which was new in the twelfth century: collections of *Allegoriae* and *Distinctiones*, which contributed to the construction of scholastic theology, alongside the *Sententiae* and *Questiones*.[12] While the literary form of the *Distinctiones* concentrates on all the biblical passages in relation to one topic (for instance, Peter of Celle's *De panibus* discusses the biblical texts which refer to bread), Richard's work, with its 'flow of allegories',[13] was the result of a deliberate construction of the interpretation of scripture. Chenu, in fact, refers to the second part of Richard's *Liber exceptionum*, which consists of allegorical explanations of the historical facts as they were presented in the first part of his work. Its success in this form was significant: as *Allegoriae in Vetus et Novum Testamentum* it was sometimes attached to Peter Comestor's *Historia scolastica*, to provide a survey of allegorical and tropological meanings to be added to Peter's literal–historical project.

Apart from this success, the *Liber*'s exegetical character must also be understood from Richard's other concerns, and his ideas about the role of exegesis in the edification and education process which is the goal of the reader's life. The encyclopaedic character combines with the medieval art of memory: Richard offers his table of contents and his summaries as an *aide-mémoire*, to help to supply the reader with the material for his *exercitatio mentis*. Richard announces exactly what he will do in the two parts of his work, and declares that each part will be preceded by a detailed table of contents. Richard's explanation for including this device is in complete accordance with traditional ideas: 'to make it easier, by the listing of chapters and the distinction of books, to understand what is read, and to retain it longer. The pre-listing of chapters and the distinction of books bring forth not a small faculty of understanding and retaining.'[14] It is, thus, a device which fits within the new mentality in the urban schools, offering easy access to books and their content, to serve the needs of scholars and preachers who had to compose sermons or systematic treatises and who wanted to find their information quickly.[15] And

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[11] See Châtillon, *Liber exceptionum*, Introduction, pp. 85–86. See also Jean Longère, 'La Fonction pastorale de Saint-Victor', in *L'Abbaye Parisienne de Saint-Victor au Moyen Age*, ed. by Jean Longère, Bibliotheca Victorina, I (Paris; Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), pp. 291–313.

[12] M.-D. Chenu, 'La Théologie symbolique', in Chenu, *La Théologie au douzième siècle*, pp. 191–209 (p. 197).

[13] Chenu, 'La Théologie symbolique', p. 198: 'ruissellement des allégories'.

[14] *Liber exceptionum*, Pars Prima, Prologus: 'ut per prepositionem capitulorum et per discretionem librorum facilius quod legitur intelligatur, diutiusque retineatur. Prepositio namque capitulorum et discretio librorum non minimam intelligendi retinendique parit facultatem' (Châtillon, p. 102, ll. 15–19).

[15] See Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, '*Statim invenire*: Schools, Preachers and New Attitudes to the Page', in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. by

evidently the work could be put to the service of these new needs, as is testified by its attachment to the *Historia scolastica*. But, as Richard's explanation makes clear, it originated from traditional ideas about learning, which had dominated monastic reading for centuries, not only concerning the process of learning but also implying the meaning of learning. The process is learning by heart. This will be facilitated by the enumerations of chapter titles, which thus serve as a memory device comparable to those of the metaphor of a building or (more popular in monastic and canonical circles) the metaphor of the ark.

The importance of *memoria* is a recurring issue in Richard's work, and is connected to the meaning of learning. The learning for which the *Liber* is a tool is supposed to result in the building of one's *memoria*, which will, in the end, amount to a restoration of the lost *imago Dei*, or at least contribute to achieving that effect. As Richard writes in the prologue to the second part of the *Liber exceptionum*:

> Whoever studies divine science, will know the benefit of his readings more by his own experience than by someone else's teaching. In this the mind of the reader will find the good of an honest occupation, the skill of meditation, the example of prayer, the fervour of devotion, the brightness of the highest contemplation. Here he will be informed towards holy imitation, instructed to the exercise of virtue, to the exhibition of good work. […] Receive, my dearest brother, this second part of our notes which you have demanded, as a little dish prepared for your soul, that in it you will spiritually put on weight, fatten, expand.[16]

Richard emphasizes the importance of memory in a continuation of this prologue, following the table of contents for this second part of the *Liber Exceptionum*:

> Here you will find what is necessary for the weakness of your understanding, in all ways useful for you as a beginner in the knowledge of truth and the love of virtue, if only you will not neglect to read what has been written here and to commit it to your memory.[17]

Robert L. Benson, Giles Constable, Carol D. Lanham, Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching, 26 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 201–225.

[16] *Liber exceptionum*, Pars Secunda, Prologus: 'Quicumque sapientie sive scientie studet divine, fructum lectionis proprio magis experimento quam alieno documento cognoscere valet. In ipsa namque legentis animus bonum possidet honeste occupationis, sollertiam meditationis; instantiam invenit orationis, fervorem devotionis, claritatem superne contemplationis. Ibi informatur ad exemplum sancte imitationis, instruitur ad exercitium virtutis, ad exhibitionem boni operis. […] Accipe itaque, frater carissime, hanc secundam exceptionum nostrarum, quas postulasti, partem, quasi quoddam ferculum anime tue paratum, ut in ipso spiritaliter incrasseris, impingueris, dilateris' (Châtillon, p. 213, ll. 2–8; 15–18).

[17] *Liber exceptionum*, Pars Secunda, Prologus: 'Invenies in hac parte libelli multa imbecillitati tui sensus necessaria, tue inchoationi, et in cognitione veritatis, et in amore virtutis omnibus modis utilia, si tamen que scripta sunt legere et memorie commendare non neglexeris' (Châtillon, p. 221, ll. 7–11).

The twofold goal of knowledge of truth and love of virtue is familiar: it is the same as in Hugh's *De sacramentis* and his other works. By committing the content of the *Liber exceptionum* to his memory, the reader will have an inventory of the meanings of biblical texts. By following the biblical stories with these meanings, he will have at his disposal the necessary elements to form his own person. When Richard writes about creation, for example, he explains its spiritual meaning—the sun as knowledge of divine nature; animals as our corporeal senses. He concludes:

> Once all these things have been thus composed, man is transformed again into the image and likeness of God, because once virtues and good works have been thus arranged in us, the sinner becomes conform and co-similar to God by justice, who was first unformed and dissimilar by guilt.[18]

Another example is Richard's exposition of all possible meanings of myrrh and its bitterness, which enables him to explore different aspects of religious life: there is the myrrh of *dolor* (when we think of evil we have committed), *timor* (when we fear punishment for our sins), *compunctio* (when, urged by *dolor* and *timor*, we repent our sins), *confessio* (when we are ashamed at confession of our sins), *satisfactio* (when, by penitence, we give satisfaction), *exercitatio* (when, by long exercise, we leave vices behind and reach the virtues), *labor* (when we labour in the six works of charity), *subjectio* (when we submit to a superior for the sake of God), *compassio* (when we have compassion with the misery of others), or *passio* (when we suffer our own misery).[19]

In a sermon on Jeremiah 17. 14, 'Heal me , O Lord, and I shall be healed' (*Sana me, Domine, et sanabor*), the body and its parts are symbols of the inner life, with teeth symbolizing meditation, shoulders as patience, the heart as wisdom and the belly as memory. Richard's discussion of memory is noteworthy. Once we have known and understood spiritual food, we will put it in our memory. From there it will be divided among all virtues, as food will be divided among all parts of the body, to strengthen them. If, on the other hand, the food is not digested properly, it will not be beneficial. The same holds true for spiritual food if it is not properly retained. Richard here presents his view on the aim of reading, *lectio*, continuing a long tradition.[20]

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[18] *Liber exceptionum*, Pars Secunda, Liber I, 2: 'His ita compositis, novissime fit homo *ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei*, quia taliter in nobis virtutibus et bonis operibus dispositis, fit peccator conformis et consimilis Deo per justitiam, qui prius fuit informis et dissimilis per culpam' (Châtillon, p. 224, ll. 42–46).

[19] *Liber exceptionum*, Pars Secunda, Liber X, sermo XVII (Châtillon, p. 408, ll. 28–51).

[20] *Liber exceptionum*, Pars Secunda, Liber X, sermo XXI: 'Per ventrem memoriam intelligimus: sicut namque corporalem cibum, ore acceptum, dentibus comminutum, in ventrem trahicimus, ut ibi decoquatur et membris omnibus distribuatur, ut ex ipso membra roborentur, sic spiritualem cibum, intelligentia cognitum, meditatione discussum et subtiliatum, intra memoriam condimus, ut illic amoris igne coctus virtutibus omnibus

These enumerations offer a framework for beginners, to be filled in later. In the *Sermones centum* Richard supplies further meanings. In later exegetical treatises, Richard presupposes the reader's knowledge of the possible tropological significations of biblical texts or images as they could be found in, for instance, his own *Liber exceptionum*, and elaborates upon these meanings: once the basic structure of memory had been created it could then be built upon, filled with more intricate meanings. The information presented within the *Liber exceptionum* and in the *Sermones centum* resonates in Richard's other works—and the principle is the same: he will, much more elaborately, explain, or rather enact, the contemplative life in terms of an explanation of a biblical text.

The Material for the Composition: Reason and Desire in Benjamin minor

One of the recurring issues in Richard's view of the contemplative life is the relative importance of man's rational and affective powers in his quest for contemplation, corresponding with the 'knowledge of truth and love of virtue' in the *Liber exceptionum*. This issue is explored explicitly in many works. It is the point of departure in *De duodecim patriarchis* (*The Twelve Patriarchs*), or *Benjamin minor*, where the psalm: *Benjamin adolescentulus in mentis excessu* (Vulgate Psalm 67. 28) sets into motion a panorama of the inner life leading to the *excessus* of Benjamin.[21] *Benjamin minor* is one of Richard's best known works and has contributed to his place in the history of mysticism. But, rather than a handbook of mysticism, it is an itinerary for the life of the reader. The prolix character of the work mentioned at the beginning of the work is fitting for monastic *lectio*, and presupposes the leisure, *otium*, to which Richard directly appeals in other works. 'Many know who this Benjamin is, some by learning, some by experience. […] Whoever has come to know him once through the instruction of experience, I am sure, discussion of this Benjamin, however abundant, will never tire him.'[22] What follows is very abundant

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administretur et dividatur ut ex eo confortentur' (Châtillon, p. 414, ll. 35–41). On the tradition of monastic reading, see for example Leclercq, *L'Amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu*; Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*.

[21] *Beniamin minor*, ed. by Jean Châtillon and Monique Duchet-Suchaut, *Richard de Saint-Victor. Les Douze Patriarches ou Beniamin minor*, SC 419 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997); PL 196, cols 1–64. In the following I shall quote from the edition by Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut (chapter, page and lines), using their spelling of the title *Beniamin minor*, and indicating the place in PL 196. On the meaning of *excessus* see the references in the Introduction by Châtillon, p. 55.

[22] *Beniamin minor* 1: 'Quis sit Beniamin iste, multi nouerunt, alii per scientiam, alii per experientiam. […] Qui enim eum experientiae magisterio semel nosse potuit, fidenter loquor,

indeed, but neither *otium* nor abundance allows for negligence. The discussion of Benjamin and his family is meant to bring the reader to enact the experience which Richard advocates. The soul is the scene and the reader is the actor aspiring to impersonate not just Benjamin, but all the members of Jacob's family: Leah and Rachel, the two wives of Jacob, their maidservants and their sons and daughter—all are presented as symbols of the faculties of the soul and of the virtues which can be achieved, and their relation to the contemplative life is emphasized, culminating in Benjamin's *excessus*.

Leah, representing *affectio*, the site of feelings and desires, and Rachel, representing *ratio*, are the two powers given to every rational mind. Throughout the first paragraphs, aspects of both are explored, as Richard circles around them in typical repetitions. Rachel means the teaching of truth, Leah the discipline of virtue; Rachel the study of wisdom, Leah desire of justice:[23]

> From reason, right decisions originate, from affection, holy desires. […] Affection really becomes Leah, when it strives to compose itself in accordance with the norm of justice; reason can certainly claim to be Rachel, when it is enlightened by the light of the highest and true wisdom.[24]

Often Leah is substituted while Rachel is hoped for. This happens 'when the mind puts itself in the bedroom of Rachel while it is not yet sufficiently purified from the uncleanness of its former way of life'.[25]

Rachel's room is not, as one might think, the scene of mystical rapture, but is connected with the reader's capacity to interpret scripture. Rachel's room is holy scripture, 'in which we without doubt know that divine wisdom hides under the decent veil of allegories. As long as we are not able to penetrate into the most

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sermo de eo, quamuis prolixus, illum satiare non poterit' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 90, ll. 4–9; PL 196, col. 1A).

[23] *Beniamin minor* 1: 'Rachel doctrina ueritatis, Lia disciplina uirtutis; Rachel studium sapientiae, Lia desiderium iustitiae'(Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 90, ll. 18–20; PL 196, col. 1B).

[24] *Beniamin minor* 3: 'Ex ratione oriuntur consilia recta, ex affectione desideria sancta. […] Sciendum itaque est quod affectio tunc ueraciter incipit Lia esse, quando satagit seipsam ad normam iustitiae componere. Et ratio Rachel esse indubitanter asseritur, quando illius summae et uerae sapientiae luce illustratur' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 96, ll. 10–17; PL 196, col. 3BC).

[25] *Beniamin minor* 4: 'Saepe contingit ut animus antiquae conuersationis sordibus minus mundatus, et ad coelestem contemplationem nondum idoneus, dum se in cubiculo Rachel collocat, dum totum se in eius amplexus parat, dum illam iam sese tenere putat, subito et inopinate inter amplexus Liae se esse deprehendat' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 98, ll. 3–8; PL 196, col. 4A).

sublime things, we do not yet find the Rachel we so long for'.[26] Scripture itself confronts the reader with his sins, and fills his heart with compunction.

The two wives thus signify man's possibilities of knowing and loving; their dynamics indicating the appropriate awareness of one's state. The one is not privileged over the other; rather they complement each other. They are integrated in a comprehensive treatment of the inner life, its many aspects represented by their servants and children. Zilpah, representing sensation, serves Leah, while Bilhah, Rachel's servant, represents imagination. Sensation obeys affection, imagination serves reason. Both are necessary, for without imagination, reason would know nothing; without sensation, affection would not perceive anything.[27] Richard outlines his epistemology here, which he will explain more elaborately in *Benjamin maior*: 'By the outer form of visible things reason rises to knowledge of invisible things, as often as it draws a likeness from those visible things to invisible things.'[28] Reason cannot go outward, just as the corporeal senses cannot go inward; thus imagination runs between the one and the other. Yet sensation has a parallel and less innocent function from the start: it provokes Leah—affection—who cannot see very well herself, to the desire of carnal pleasures. Zilpah is drunk, and all Leah's riches cannot quench her thirst completely.[29] Similarly, Bilhah—imagination—has her own vice. She is garrulous, always suggesting images and fantasies, for instance, when one is praying, and even when the heart's will does not assent to listen, she persists, just as old men or old women do, who go on talking regardless of whether anybody is listening or not. Richard ends this part with an appeal to one's own experience:

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[26] *Beniamin minor* 4, p. 98–100, 9–17: 'Quid enim Scripturam sacram, nisi Rachel cubiculum dicimus, in qua sapientiam diuinam sub decenti allegoriarum uelamine latitare non dubitamus? In tali cubiculo Rachel totiens quaeritur, quotiens in lectione sacra spiritualis intelligentia indagatur. Sed quamdiu adhuc ad sublimia penetranda minime sufficimus, diu cupitam, diligenter quaesitam Rachel nondum inuenimus. Incipimus ergo gemere, suspirare, nostram caecitatem non solum plangere, sed et erubescere' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, pp. 98–100, ll. 9–17; PL 196, col. 4AB).

[27] *Beniamin minor* 5: 'In tantum unaquaeque ancillarum dominae suae necessaria esse cognoscitur, ut sine illis mundus totus nil eis posse conferre uideretur. Nam sine imaginatione ratio nichil sciret, sine sensualitate affectio nil saperet' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, pp. 100–102, ll. 3–7; PL 196, col. 4C).

[28] *Beniamin minor* 5: 'Per rerum enim uisibilium speciem surgit ad rerum inuisibilium cognitionem, quotiens ex his ad illa quandam trahit similitudinem' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 102, ll. 16–18; PL 196, col. 4D).

[29] *Beniamin minor* 5–6: 'Quae enim alia est quam sensualitas quae animi affectionem carnalium uoluptatum desiderio inflammat, et earum delectatione inebriat? […] Hinc est quod Lia, animi uidelicet affectio, nunc contemnenda diligit, nunc diligenda contempnit, quia dum eius oculus in rerum iudicio caligat, carnis appetitum sequi non erubescit. […] Zelpha temulenta. […] et Zelphae quidem sitim dominae suae copia tanta omnino extinguere non potest' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 104, l. 41 – p. 106, l. 5; PL 196, col. 5BC).

who does not know about Bilhah's loquaciousness or Zilpah's drunkenness, apart from he who does not know himself? [30]

What follows is meant to help the reader to achieve this necessary self-knowledge, which is, at the same time, a process of composition of the self. Leah's sons are the principal feelings (*affectus*), but only after these are ordered into virtues, for 'virtue is nothing else than the mind's affect ordered into what it should be and to the measure it should be'.[31] The main affects are hope and fear, joy and grief, hate, love and shame. Only when ordered in the right way and in right measure can they count as sons of Jacob. Thus, although *affectus* carries its sense of passivity, the affects (and, indeed, the thoughts—*cogitationes*) are the material from which to compose oneself. Throughout the *Benjamin minor* the reader 'gives birth' to these children. The order in which the children are born is used to indicate the order in which the reader's development takes place: restraining carnal life, fighting temptations—of the senses and of the thinking life—knowing inner sweetness, hating vices, shame, correcting one's intention. Thus, Levi (hope) is born—or rather, as his name indicates, added—only after Reuben (fear of God) and Simeon (grief about one's sins), because without this fear and this grief hope would be presumption—one of the main temptations in monastic life.[32] After the birth of Judah (love), Rachel desires a son of her own—that is, the soul begins to desire knowledge.[33] To the as yet rude mind this is too difficult: at this point, it is only by her servant that Rachel can have children. The imagination of a rational being is able to fashion unknown things from what it knows by the senses, and from the good and evil it knows, mixed as it is on earth, it can deduce what is eternal good and evil.[34]

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[30] *Beniamin minor* 6: 'Sed de garrulitate Balae seu temulentia Zelphae quis nesciat, nisi forte qui seipsum ignorat?' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 106, ll. 30–31; PL 196, col. 6A).

[31] *Beniamin minor* 7: 'Siquidem, nichil aliud est uirtus quam animi affectus ordinatus et moderatus. Ordinatus, quando ad illud est ad quod esse debet; moderatus, quando tantus est quantus esse debet' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 108, ll. 6–9; PL 196, col. 6B).

[32] *Beniamin minor* 10: 'Non datum, sed additum, sermo diuinus hunc filium nominat, ne ante timorem et condignum paenitentiae dolorem quis de spe ueniae praesumat' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 114, ll. 5–7; PL 196, col. 7C). For the meaning of the names of Jacob's children, from Jerome's *Liber interpretationis*, see the footnotes in the edition by Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut.

[33] *Beniamin minor* 13: 'Nato itaque Iuda, id est bonorum inuisibilium desiderio exurgente atque feruente, incipit Rachel amore prolis aestuare, quia incipit uelle cognoscere' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 126, ll. 15–18; PL 196, col. 10A).

[34] *Beniamin minor* 16: 'Rationalis autem est illa [sc. imaginatio], quando ex his quae per sensum corporeum nouimus, aliquid imaginabiliter fingimus. […] Huiusmodi imaginatione saepe utimur, cum quae sint futurae uitae bona uel mala diligentius rimamur' [and, further on, see the statement of earthly ambivalence] 'Nusquam hic sola bona, nusquam hic sola mala, sed permixta simul et bona et mala, et quamuis in utroque genere sint multa, nunquam tamen

Thus Dan and Naphtali represent the imagination of future evil and future good respectively.[35] By Dan's ministry we reprehend misleading thoughts, that is why he is called Dan—judgement.[36] Naphtali kindles good desires by the consideration of their rewards.[37] Gad and Asher, Zilpah's children, are abstinence and patience.[38] Bilhah's children come before Zilpah's: first useless thoughts (*cogitationes*) have to be repressed, before sensation's appetite can be moderated.[39] Gad and Asher illustrate many other aspects and their intricate connections, in a concatenation of biblical associations, before the reader proceeds to the birth of Leah's remaining three children. Issachar's joy is the condition for true peace, only possible when one can forget for a moment all evil things: 'O happy one, to whom it is given to concentrate all the heart's scattered movements in one, to fix one's desire on the fountain of real happiness.'[40]

The concentration necessary for this forgetting may be only temporarily possible; nevertheless, this fixed desire is the centre around which the efforts of the reader are turning endlessly, and the centre of the circle on which the other children are revolving. Born after this taste of inner sweetness, Zebulun represents the resulting hate of vices and the zeal of souls.[41] There is need for caution though: apparently, for the sake of humility, some people are actually lukewarm in their zeal of souls, while others, under the pretext of the zeal of justice, really act in a spirit of rage.[42]

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inueniuntur sola' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p.132, ll. 9–16 and ll. 17–19; PL 196, col. 11C).

[35] *Beniamin minor* 18 (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 136–138; PL 196, cols 12C–13B).

[36] *Beniamin minor* 20: 'Quia ergo per officium Dan illecebrosas cogitationes deprehendimus, arguimus, damnamus, castigamus, recte eum Dan, id est iudicium, uocamus' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 142, ll. 10–12; PL 196, col. 14A).

[37] *Beniamin minor* 22: 'Sed sicut ad officium Dan spectat per repraesentationem poenae reprimere exurgentia uitia, sic ad Neptalim pertinet per considerationem praemiorum inflammare bona desideria' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, pp. 146–148, ll. 1–4; PL 196, col. 15B).

[38] *Beniamin minor* 25 (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 158, ll. 10–11; PL 196, col. 17D).

[39] *Beniamin minor* 27: 'Si enim imaginationis euagatio, quae fit per inutiles cogitationes prius non reprimitur, absque dubio sensualitatis appetitus immoderatus minime temperatur' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 164, ll. 5–7; PL 196, col. 19B).

[40] *Beniamin minor* 39: 'O felicem, qui potuit, uel ad horam, omnium malorum obliuisci, et illa interna pace uel requie saltem ad modicum potiri! Felicem nichilominus, cui datum est dispersiones cordis in unum colligere, et in illo uerae felicitatis fonte desiderium figere' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 204, ll. 77–82; PL 196, col. 29B).

[41] *Beniamin minor* 40 (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, pp. 206–210; PL 196, cols 29D–30D).

[42] *Beniamin minor* 41 (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, pp. 210–212; PL 196, cols 30D–31C).

As will be seen in other works, this is only one of the forms in which the problem of ambiguity can present itself, and (compared with the forms assumed by other ambiguities) a rather straightforward one.

Dinah, *pudor*, is born next, when one acknowledges guilt and the impossibility of sinlessness.[43] Here again there is more than one layer. *Pudor* has to be put into order, because guilt is distinguished from shame (*infamia*)[44] and internal transparency is much more important than one's reputation among men: Dinah is 'that judgement by which everyone is summoned by his own conscience, convinced of his guilt, condemned and punished by a fit punishment of confusion'.[45] Man thus is his own judge. This does not imply that he is left to his own devices, as this judgement is all part of the drama he is performing. Shechem, who saw Dinah, and 'lay with her and defiled her' when she went out to see the daughters of the land (Genesis 34. 1-2), has himself circumcised, not for the sake of God, but because of Dinah (and thus not because of his conscience but because of his reputation).[46] Dinah goes out and meets him and loses her integrity when she forgets the memory of her weakness, which used to keep her humble, and delights in the praise of others.[47] Her brothers' anger about her loss of integrity points to immoderate sadness and abstinence, once again indicating the importance not only of ordering but also of moderating the affects.[48]

Only when Joseph—discretion—is born, does man begin to know himself; self-knowledge implying, again, the process of composing one's self.[49] The preceding

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[43] *Beniamin minor* 45 (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 224, ll. 22–23; PL 196, col. 34A).

[44] *Beniamin minor* 46: 'Ille pudor uerus esse cognoscitur, quem uitiorum odium praecedit et comitatur. Alioquin, si in peccato deprehenderis, et deprehensus pudore confunderis, non te credo erubescere culpam, sed infamiam' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 224, ll. 2–6; PL 196, col. 34AB).

[45] *Beniamin minor* 48: 'Sed ne de nominis ratione tacite praeterisse uideamur, Dina iudicium istud interpretatur. Hoc itaque est illud iudicium quo quisque a propria conscientia conuenitur, conuincitur, condemnatur, et digna confusionis poena multatur. […] Miro itaque modo mens cuiusque de propria conscientia conuicta, et condigna confusione deiecta, uno eodemque tempore ipsa contra seipsam dictat sententiam, ipsa de seipsa sumit uindictam. Hoc itaque est illud iudicium in quo unus idemque est ille qui iudicat, et ille qui iudicatur' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, pp. 228–230, ll. 1–13; PL 196, col. 35BC).

[46] *Beniamin minor* 49–50 (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, pp. 232–238; PL 196, cols 35D–37C).

[47] *Beniamin minor* 51: 'Nam quoniam uerecundiae uenustas ab omnibus fere commendatur, laudatur, amatur, Dinam egredientem et intima sua deserentem, et quae eam humiliare consueuerat infirmitatis suae memoriam cito obliuiscentem, subito hominum laudes excipiunt, et eam, dum fauoribus demulcent, corrumpunt' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 238, ll. 3–8; PL 196, col. 37CD).

[48] *Beniamin minor* 57–59 (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, pp. 256–262; PL 196, cols 41D–43C).

[49] *Beniamin minor* 67 (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, pp. 282–284; PL 196, col. 48A–D).

parts thus turn out to be steps towards this self-knowledge. Benjamin—contemplation—is born only after this self-knowledge has been achieved (if, indeed, it is achieved), both self-knowledge and knowledge of God being children of Rachel—reason.[50] The rational mind finds itself as the most important mirror with which to see God. One has to wipe this mirror, to clean one's spirit, if one wishes to see God. Only after having wiped this mirror, and after having looked into it for a long time, will some brightness of divine light begins to shine.[51] From this inner light, the mind is kindled and inspired to see the light above itself:

> From this vision, I say, he conceives the flame of the desire to see God, and becomes confident. The mind which burns by the desire of this vision, knows that if it hopes what it desires, it actually has conceived Benjamin, and the more its desire grows, the nearer it is to giving birth.[52]

Rachel (reason) having laboured so long, dies in the process of giving birth, because the mind experiences the enormity of reason's imperfection. This is the realm of knowledge beyond reason.[53] To the mind that tries to ascend to the height of knowing, the first and principle study should be to know itself. This is where even philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle failed. By integrating the text 'Here those searching failed in the search. Let man ascend to a high heart (*cor altum*) and God shall be exalted' (Ps 64. 6, Vulg. Ps 63. 7), Richard retrospectively explains the height of knowing and connects self-knowledge with its ultimate goal: 'Learn, man, to think about yourself, learn to know yourself and you have ascended to the height of your heart.'[54] The theme of ascending and the *disce cognoscere teipsum* are

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[50] *Beniamin minor* 71: 'Vterque de eadem matre nascitur, quia et Dei cognitio et sui ex ratione percipitur. […] Frustra cordis oculum erigit ad uidendum Deum, qui nondum idoneus est ad uidendum seipsum. Prius discat homo cognoscere inuisibilia sua, quam praesumat posse apprehendere inuisibilia diuina' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 296, ll. 6–14; PL 196, col. 51BC).

[51] *Beniamin minor* 72: 'Praecipuum et principale speculum ad uidendum Deum, animus rationalis absque dubio inuenit seipsum […] Tergat ergo speculum suum, mundet spiritum suum, quisquis sitit uidere Deum suum' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 296, ll. 1–2 and p. 298, ll. 11–12; PL 196, col. 51CD).

[52] *Beniamin minor* 72: 'Ex hac, inquam, uisione, uidendi Deum flammam desiderii concipit et fiduciam sumit. Mens itaque quae iam uisionis huius desiderio flagrat, si iam sperat quod desiderat, iam se Beniamin concepisse cognoscat. Sperando enim concipit, desiderando parturit, et quanto amplius crescit desiderium, tanto appropinquat ad partum' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 298, ll. 24–30; PL 196, col. 52AB).

[53] *Beniamin minor* 73 (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, pp. 300–302, ll. 22–28; PL 196, col. 52B–D).

[54] *Beniamin minor* 75: 'Disce, homo, cogitare, disce cognoscere teipsum, et ascendisti ad cor altum' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 308, ll. 35–36; PL 196, col. 54B). For a pessimistic view of man's capacities of knowledge in Bernard Silvestris connected to the same psalm see Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry*, pp. 121–122.

emphatically repeated in the remaining chapters, where Benjamin's *excessus* is further explained through the story of Christ's transfiguration. The height of the mountain is associated with the mountain of transfiguration, where Christ was accompanied by three disciples. They see Moses and Elijah, and hear the Father. The reader has to ascend the mountain as well and to 'learn to know himself', if he wishes 'to understand the law and the prophet without a teacher, without an interpreter' or to 'hear the hidden secret of the Father'. The repeated call for self-knowledge culminates in a quotation from antiquity: 'From the heavens descended γνώθι σεαυτον—that is, Know Yourself.'[55]

In the end, Richard returns to Jacob's family: Benjamin descends into Egypt—that is, he recalls his mind from the contemplation of eternal things to that of temporal things—and he embraces Joseph. Meditation and contemplation thus meet each other.[56] We shall encounter the return from the contemplative *excessus* in Richard's other works as well. Here, the sudden change has been announced with recourse to scripture:

> One must consider, not only in Benjamin but in all his brothers, and observe diligently the way in which divine Scripture in numerous places about the same thing tends to extend its meaning and then again to restrict it or even change it. It is accustomed to determine these modes of alternating significations in many ways, and to reveal its meaning now by place, now by act, or by other circumstances.[57]

After all the long digressions the end comes abruptly:

> Do you see how divine Scripture changes its way of signifying around one and the same thing, yet everywhere adding something so as not to hide its meaning completely? In the death of Rachel, contemplation rises above reason; in Benjamin's

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[55] *Beniamin minor* 78: 'uis absque doctore, sine expositore, intelligere legem et prophetiam? Ascende in montem istum, disce cognoscere teipsum. Vis audire paterni secreti archanum? Ascende in montem istum, disce cognoscere teipsum. De coelo descendit Γνώθι σεαυτόν illud, id est: "Nosce teipsum"' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 316, ll. 9–14; PL 196, col. 56A). See the note in the edition by Châtillon at this passage for the source, Juvenal, *Satires*, XI, 27, via Macrobius' *Commentary on the Somnium Scipionis* I, 9, 2.

[56] *Beniamin minor* 87 (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, pp. 342–346; PL 196, cols 62B–64A).

[57] *Beniamin minor* 86: 'Hoc autem non solum in Beniamin, sed in omnibus eius fratribus oportet attendere, immo in innumeris Scripturarum locis diligenter obseruare, quomodo soleat Scriptura diuina circa eamdem rem nunc significationem extendere, modo restringere, uel etiam mutare. Solet autem hos alternantium significationum modos, modis multis determinare, et modo per locum, modo per actum, uel aliis quibusque circumstantiis, sensum suum aperire' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 342, ll. 35–32; PL 196, col. 62AB).

entrance into Egypt contemplation descends to imagination; in the embrace of Benjamin and Josef human reason applauds divine revelation.[58]

Concluding his book on these hermeneutical notes, Richard suggests that the experience to which he alluded in the introduction, by which some readers know Benjamin, may well be connected with the enumerations and variations which a reader encounters in a work such as this. The wives, servants and children each represent different aspects of the inner life, rational as well as affective, and they are there to be recognized and performed by the reader in his itinerary. Much more than being instruments of description, they are part of the process.

Exegesis, Epistemology and Self-Knowledge: De archa mystica *or* Benjamin maior

Approaching the subject by a process of stripping it layer by layer, Richard comes to contemplate the contemplative process itself. This we see in *De archa mystica* or *Benjamin maior*. Contemplation has become its own subject. The Ark of the Covenant becomes the *figura* of the process of contemplative life, of its content, and of the way to realize this process–content, which is inextricably tied up with the textual process of exegesis and the evocation of biblical images. It is like a musical score to be performed by the reader. In this score Richard offers his reader the expression by which to experience his life in a specific way, an expression without which this experience cannot eventuate. In *The Mystical Ark*, the process of composing oneself is identified with an epistemological operation, linked with the architectural image of the building of the ark. The process of knowing, as it was referred to in *Benjamin minor* (a process which shifts from sensual images to purely rational and even supra-rational, intellectual contemplation) is elaborated and made into the object of contemplation.[59]

The topic is first introduced as the ark of sanctification: the grace of contemplation, which 'sanctifies everyone who touches it'.[60] It is then defined as the

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[58] *Beniamin minor* 87: 'Videsne quomodo diuina Scriptura circa unam eamdemque rem significationis modum alternat, ubique tamen aliquid adiungit unde sensum suum ex toto latere non sinat? In morte Rachel contemplatio supra rationem ascendit; in introitu Beniamin in Aegyptum contemplatio usque ad imaginationem descendit; in deosculatione Beniamin et Ioseph diuinae reuelationi humana ratio applaudit' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 346, ll. 32–38; PL 196, cols 63A–64A).

[59] On Richard's theory of knowledge see Ebner, *Die Erkenntnislehre Richards von St.Viktor.*

[60] Benjamin Maior I, 1: 'quod quicumque tetigerit eam sanctificabitur', quoted from *Contemplatio. Philosophische Studien zum Traktat Benjamin Maior des Richard von St. Victor. Mit einer verbesserten Edition des Textes*, ed. by Marc-Aeilko Aris (Frankfurt am Main: Josef Knecht, 1996), p. 5, ll. 23–24; PL 196, col. 63D. In the following I quote from the

Ark of the Covenant, as it was shown to Moses. With the role of grace thus guaranteed, the focus shifts to the efforts required to prepare man for this grace. The first effort is that of defining contemplation, distinguishing it from other sorts of mental activity and differentiating its various sorts. What is important in this first distinction is the movement of increasing concentration succeeded by relaxation. The senses offer images to reason (*ratio*) where they become the objects of all kinds of thoughts. These wander around purposelessly. When the mind comes upon one of these free-floating thoughts and wants to know more about it, it has to concentrate and cogitation turns into meditation. Even more intensive is contemplation. From this point of concentration things can be seen in all kinds of ways: the process can now be reversed, and an expanded vision is possible.[61] Comparable to the various ways of birds flying, contemplation takes various perspectives.[62] Richard then distinguishes six forms of contemplation, based on the principle that knowledge of visible things leads to a knowledge of invisible things: contemplation in and according to imagination; in imagination and according to reason; in reason and according to imagination; in and according to reason; beyond but not against reason; beyond and against reason. Thus there are two forms of contemplation in imagination, two in reason, two in understanding.[63] After characterizing every kind of contemplation and the relations between the different kinds, Richard briefly describes how the building of the ark mystically signifies the contemplative life: its construction is the first kind; the gilding is the second; the third is the crown, the fourth, the mercy seat. The two cherubim, finally, are the fifth and sixth kind of contemplation.[64]

If this sounds all rather obscure, one has to realize that this introduction is only a summary, albeit for learned people, or for people who have little time, as Richard declares at the end of the first part: 'But as we are *otiosi*, at leisure, and will speak to people who are at leisure, we should not because of the lazy be lazy ourselves to repeat the same things with a useful and maybe to some necessary supplement.' As he announces to his reader, in the following parts he will explore the contemplative life in more detail,

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edition by Aris (page and lines), followed by the place in PL. I follow Aris' spelling of the title (Benjamin Maior).

[61] *Benjamin Maior* I, 3–4 (Aris, pp. 8–10; PL 196, cols 66C–68C). For this distinction in Hugh of Saint-Victor compare *In Ecclesiasten* I (PL 175, cols 116D–117A). See also Sicard, *Diagrammes médiévaux*, pp. 233–234. Richard acknowledges his debt to Hugh: see chapter 3, note 2.

[62] *Benjamin Maior* I, 5: 'Iuxta hoc sane propositarum similitudinum exemplar contemplationis nostrae volatus multiformiter variatur' (Aris, p. 11, ll. 7–8; PL 196, col. 69A).

[63] *Benjamin Maior* I, 6 (Aris, pp. 12–14; PL 196, cols 70B–72C).

[64] *Benjamin Maior* I, 9–12 (Aris, pp. 16–21; PL 196, cols 74B–80A).

not in haste but slowly, after the manner of the contemplative, according to the nature of contemplation. For the busy people we have summarized these things in a brief summary succinctly, for the people at leisure we shall by repeating the same things unfold them more broadly. [65]

Richard structures this remaining part of his text by pursuing an elaborate process: explicating, unfolding the text, getting near it in enveloping movements, then summarizing and concentrating again on a specific point, then using this as a point of departure for further digressions, and so on. His discussion dilates and contracts, in ever widening and then narrowing circles, enacting in his text the process of divagation and concentration which he had earlier defined in his distinction between cogitation, meditation and contemplation. Thus, the intended way of reading is anticipated by the structure of the text. In *Benjamin minor* Richard had referred to the way in which scripture extends the meaning of a word only to restrain it afterwards or to change the meaning altogether (*extendere, restringere, mutare*),[66] and, in effect, Richard does the same. Discussing the last two stages of contemplation, symbolized by the cherubim, Richard indicates how his teaching depends upon the *similitudo* proposed by the biblical description, with which he elucidates the parts of the contemplative life.[67] This principle of mimetically writing about contemplation thus directs the reader in the way he should proceed to read and to compose himself. What becomes clear from Richard's explicit hermeneutics in this place is valid for his other works and for much of monastic reading culture. More than once Richard appeals to the reader's experience and urges the reader to participate in the process: the epistemological process is not opposed to but subsumed within the reader's *experientia*. The reader constructs his experience in

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[65] *Benjamin Maior* I, 12: 'Sed quia otiosi sumus et otiosis loquimur, propter pigriores tamen pigrum nobis esse non debet adhuc eadem cum utili et forte quibusdam necessario supplemento repetere et eidem materiae liberius vacando in ipsam adhuc aliquid latius agere. Contemplantis itaque more contemplationisque tenore de contemplatione agamus, nec tantae iucunditatis studium et tantae admirationis spectaculum in transitu videamus. Occupatis ista compendiosa brevitate succinximus, otiosis autem eadem repetendo latius replicamus, simul utrumque praecaventes et festinos viatores contra propositum detinere et curiosos novitatum exploratores contra votum urgere' (Aris, p. 21, ll. 21–29; PL 196, cols 78D–80A).

[66] *Beniamin minor* 86: 'Hoc autem non solum in Beniamin, sed in omnibus eius fratribus oportet attendere, immo in innumeris Scripturarum locis diligenter obseruare, quomodo soleat Scriptura diuina circa eamdem rem nunc significationem extendere, modo restringere, uel etiam mutare. Solet autem hos alternantium significationum modos, modis multis determinare, et modo per locum, modo per actum, uel aliis quibusque circumstantiis, sensum suum aperire' (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 342, ll. 35–32; PL 196, col. 62AB).

[67] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 1: 'Libet sane huic descriptioni vehementer intendere et doctrinae nostrae regulam ex proposita similitudine sumere et iuxta descriptionis huius formulam operis nostri formam vel modum excudere' (Aris, p. 86, ll. 8–10; PL 196, col. 135B).

the process. Experience relates to knowledge as well as feelings, and is tied to the reading process and the images evoked by it.

In the second book Richard sets out to explain the first three sorts of contemplation. The ark is built of wood. This similitude refers to the first kind of contemplation. The senses offer the *materia* for this first kind. In the great forest (*silva*) offered by the senses, everyone can find wood and build himself an ark.[68] As a matter of fact, in the length, width and height of the ark, this contemplation turns out to be about things, works and morals, and each cubit of each dimension again signals some aspect: things are considered according to their matter, which accounts for one cubit; their form, another cubit; and their nature. That the latter is only half a cubit signifies that the nature of things is not fully understandable. Similarly, the one and a half cubits of the width refers to the works of nature and the works of man, the first again being only partially knowable. Morals originate partly in divine, partly in human institutions. As divine institutions are only imperfectly known, the one and a half cubits of height is thus explained.[69]

In the second kind of contemplation the ark is gilded: *cogitationes*, brought forward by the senses, are the material for understanding. The *ratio* of visible things is examined, which means that we consider the cause, mode, effect, utility and reason of everything.[70]

In the third stage, through the likeness of visible things we achieve some knowledge about invisible things, which we cannot know by experience. It is here that man first learns that he is more than a mere living being, *animalis*, and begins to be *spiritualis*. Concerning itself with spiritual things, the mind begins to become spiritual itself.[71] Therefore, together with the fourth kind of contemplation (dicussed below), the third kind offers the greatest consolation.[72] This does not, however, exclude something which is potentially rather disconcerting: in the third contemplation the rings at the corners of the ark point to divine providence—*scientia*—the enigma of evil befalling good people and vice versa. Richard

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[68] *Benjamin Maior* II, 2 (Aris, p. 23, l.14; PL 196, col. 80B). Richard contrasts this *silva* with the *nemus umbrosa* where worldly philosophers are looking for vain knowledge. For *silva* as the depth of scripture with its hidden meanings, see de Lubac, *Exégèse medievale*, I, 119.

[69] *Benjamin Maior* II, 3–6 (Aris, pp. 24–28; PL 196, cols 81C–85A).

[70] *Benjamin Maior* II, 7–11 (Aris, pp. 28–34; PL 196, cols 85B–89D).

[71] *Benjamin Maior* II, 13: 'In hoc primo statu dedocetur homo esse animalis et discit effici spiritualis, eo quod tunc incipiat spiritualia comparare et reformari in novitate sensus sui satagens cotidie magis magisque sapere *quae sursum sunt non quae super terram* (Colossians 3. 2)' (Aris, p. 35, ll. 8–10; PL 196, col. 90D).

[72] *Benjamin Maior* II, 15: 'Constat autem in hac et in subsequenti speculatione maximam et paene praecipuam spiritualium virorum consolationem nostris temporibus inesse' (Aris, p. 38, l. 34 to p. 39, l. 1; PL 196, col. 94B).

incorporates the unsolvable problem implied here by presenting it as subject to contemplation: 'Consider how difficult it is to honour the envelope of this perplexity with appropriate admiration.'[73]

Book Three, the central part of *Benjamin maior*, is completely dedicated to the fourth kind of contemplation, and explores a subject pivotal to the whole contemplative process: the incorporeal and invisible essences—the human and angelic spirits.[74] Here the soul enters into itself, into its faculties and their limits. The mercy seat, which expresses this contemplation, has to be made of pure gold, signifying 'only pure and accurate understanding.'[75] There is no role here, Richard insists, for the imagination, that 'creator, director, restorer of corporeal phantasms'.[76] Visible things have a role in the process of knowledge, but only to teach us their own vanity, thus urging us to flee them. This is, as Richard exclaims, clearly a difficult contemplation:

> Who will let me find the man […] who is not lacking in gold, or in assiduous skill to make the mercy seat with which to cover the ark? […] Who, I say, is he who is so intent on the concord of heavenly minds, on the harmony of spiritual joys, that he will repress all human glory, all human prudence […]?[77]

Later, at the end of his discussion of the fourth contemplation Richard shows how this harmony is brought about. What becomes clear, however, is that human prudence and imagination resist elimination, if only because of the paradox that, in the realm of the visible to which they give access, 'countless things are by divine

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[73] *Benjamin Maior* II, 22: 'Attende ergo quam sit difficile huius perplexionis involucrum digna admiratione venerari' (Aris, p. 49, ll. 28–29; PL 196, col. 104A).

[74] *Benjamin Maior* III, 1: 'Constat itaque hoc contemplationis genus, uti superius iam diximus, in incorporeis et invisibilibus essentiis utpote spiritibus angelicis et spiritibus humanis' (Aris, p. 55, ll. 6–8; PL 196, cols 108D–109A).

[75] *Benjamin Maior* III, 1: 'Illud iubetur fieri de auro puro et mundo. Tu doceris ex eo in hac consideratione uti debere intellectu subtili et puro' (Aris, p. 55, ll. 15–16; PL 196, col. 109AB).

[76] *Benjamin Maior* III, 1: 'Quid hic facit phantasmatum corporalium creatrix, moderatrix, reparatrix imaginatio?' (Aris, p. 55, ll. 16–17; PL 196, col. 109B). On the aporia, in Richards writings, of imagination's limited role and the need for metaphors and language based on images in the contemplative process, see Denis Renevey, *Language, Self and Love: Hermeneutics in the Writings of Richard Rolle and the Commentaries on the Song of Songs* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), esp. pp. 13–21.

[77] *Benjamin Maior* III, 1: 'Quis mihi det invenire virum divitiarum, virum plene eruditum, talem denique virum, cui nec desit auri copia, nec artis industria ad faciendum propitiatorium, quo operienda est arca? […] Quis, inquam, ille est […] qui eousque in caelestium animorum concordiam, in spiritualium gaudiorum harmoniam intendat, ut omnem mundanam gloriam, omnem humanam prudentiam et per despectum deorsum premat et sibi ipsi interim per oblivionem abscondat?' (Aris, p. 56, ll. 11–27; PL 196, col. 110AB).

disposition to be admired', even though they should be held in contempt because of their mutability.[78] The tension which ran through the work of Hugh of Saint-Victor, between the visible world as vanity and as a sign of the invisible, seems to be more acute in Richard, who has withdrawn into man himself, as is evident, for example, in his explanation of the necessary role of imagination in attaining knowledge of the invisible and his dismissal of this faculty in the realm of the contemplation of the invisible. Imagination returns at least as part of the subject matter of this contemplation. Besides, the *similitudines* with which alone one can express the realm of knowledge of the invisible, in their character as images and *figurae*, are necessarily bound to the work of imagination, betraying an ineradicable attachment to the reality which the reader seeks to transcend.

Richard first eloquently emphasizes the necessity of self-knowledge. To know oneself is a condition for the contemplation of angelic spirits and for the contemplation of the divine in the last two contemplations, because man is made into the image of God. The whole process thus hinges upon self-knowledge:

> The first thing in this consideration is that you return to yourself, enter into your heart, learn to estimate your spirit. Discuss what you are, what you will be, what you should be, what you can be. […] Learn to know from your own spirit what you must think about other spirits. This is a door, a staircase, an entrance, here is the ascent, through here one enters inside, through here we are lifted to the highest, this is the way to the top of this speculation, this is the mechanism to make the mercy seat, this, no doubt, is the technique by which purity of heart is regained, and once regained, is kept.[79]

In this way the reader will complete what he began in the third contemplation, and become spiritual.[80] Before we can examine the depth of God we must examine the

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[78] *Benjamin Maior* III, 2: 'Quamvis enim in ipsis sint innumera ex divina dispositione miranda, sunt tamen eadem ipsa et pro sui mutabilitate contemnenda et pro nostra utilitate fugienda' (Aris, p. 58, ll. 1–3; PL 196, col. 111C).

[79] *Benjamin Maior* III, 3: 'Primum ergo est in hac consideratione, ut redeas ad teipsum, intres ad cor tuum, discas aestimare spiritum tuum. Discute quid sis, quid fueris, quid esse debueris, quid esse poteris. […] Disce ex tuo spiritu cognoscere, quid debeas de aliis spiritibus aestimare. Haec porta, haec scala, hic introitus, iste ascensus, hac intratur ad intima, hac elevamur ad summa, haec via ad huius speculationis fastigium, hoc fabricandi propitiatorii artificium, haec ars absque dubio, per quam cordis munditia recuperatur, recuperata servatur' (Aris, p. 59, ll. 27–35; PL 196, col. 113AB). On the central role of self-knowledge in Richard's epistemology see Hideki Nakamura, '"Cognitio sui" bei Richard von Sankt Viktor', in "*Scientia" und "Disciplina". Wissenstheorie und Wissenschaftspraxis im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Rainer Berndt and others (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002), pp. 127–156.

[80] *Benjamin Maior* III, 5: 'Cum enim incipis spiritualibus theoriis insistere et per spiritus tui considerationem in spirituum contemplationem assurgere et in hunc modum ex spiritualibus spiritualia comparare, incipis et tu pariter spiritualis esse, immo absque dubio in

depth of our heart, inscrutable except to the spiritual man, who 'judges all things yet he himself is judged of no men' (AV I Corinthians 2. 15), who in his heart has his own world, and his own heaven (in fact, a triple heaven).

Here imagination returns to the stage, be it as the object of contemplation, when Richard distinguishes Paul's three heavens as referring to the realm of imagination, reason and understanding, in an interjected summary of the whole contemplative process.[81] The imaginative heaven encloses all similitudes of sensible things. Rational principles belong to the second heaven. The third heaven represents contemplation of spiritual things and the divine.

Things are inscrutable indeed, except for the help provided by images which underpin and enhance the whole process in an imaginative operation of exegesis. To explain how the length and width of the mercy seat have meaning, Richard appeals to the nature of things, adding a nuance to his earlier exclusion of the world that we know by the senses: 'We can learn in those bodily things, how we must put the foot of our investigation in spiritual contemplations.'[82] This consideration sets in motion a tour of the five stages of the fourth contemplation, corresponding with the units of the measures for the length and width of the mercy seat. The two and a half units of the length correspond to man's being, knowing and willing. Whereas we all know by experience what is knowing and willing, each thus being one cubit, the being, or substance of the soul, is only partly knowable and does not achieve more than half a cubit.[83] The one and a half cubits of the width similarly expresses the role of deliberation, which we can know, and the role of grace, of which we have only partial knowledge.[84] When grace is withdrawn, this teaches us that human weakness can not do anything by itself; grace returning shows us what we are by God's gift.

From another angle, length represents the beginnings of the contemplative life and width its progress. We can, in line with the consideration of length, bring into our speculation all the qualities of the soul, its thoughts and feelings. They form the natural material which then, according to the consideration of width, is transformed:

> What a pleasing, what an appropriate, what a delightful sight, to draw into our speculation according to the first consideration so many qualities of the soul, so many of its thoughts, so many of its affections, and to suspend the mind in their admiration. O what a wonderful view, O what a stupendous delight, to have before our eyes, according to the second consideration, and to cling for a long time to such a

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hac contemplatione perficeris, quod in praecedenti incipis esse, videlicet spiritualis' (Aris, p. 62, ll. 4–8; PL 196, col. 115AB).

[81] *Benjamin Maior* III, 8 (Aris, pp. 65–66; PL 196, col. 118A–D).

[82] *Benjamin Maior* III, 11: 'Si rerum naturam consulimus, in ipsis profecto corporibus discere poterimus, quomodo investigationis pedem in spirituales theorias ponere debeamus' (Aris, p. 69, ll. 7–9; PL 196, col. 121B).

[83] *Benjamin Maior* III, 12 (Aris, pp. 69–70; PL 196, cols 121D–122B).

[84] *Benjamin Maior* III, 17 (Aris, p. 75; PL 196, col. 126B–D).

contemplation, so many virtues of the mind, so many of its practice, so many of its merits.[85]

Continuing in this key of admiration, in an elaboration of this survey, Richard breaks into praise of human faculties, including thinking and imagination. As to the first step in this contemplation, related to the essence of the soul, he is short. Its presence in the whole body is as wonderful as God's omnipresence in the world.[86] The second step concerns the faculties which have a role in human knowledge and thus in the pursuit of truth. While, in the Introduction, Richard had defined *cogitatio* as being aimless, from the perspective of the mercy seat's length as indicating the goods of creation, we admire its swiftness and rapidity, although some disquiet resounds at the same time:

> Who can properly weigh, who sufficiently estimate, who is not terrified in the admiration of this consideration, if he diligently observes what is that multiple fluency of human cogitation, what is its restless and tireless swiftness, that runs through so many, such varied, such endless things, that does not rest at any hour, at any moment, that passes through so many distances of space, so many turnings of times in such a speed, to which everywhere such an easy transit opens up, such a prompt running to and fro from the highest to the lowest, from the lowest to the highest, from the first to the last, from the last to the first.[87]

At this level of contemplation there is no trace here of the contempt reserved for imagination as previously expressed in the beginning of Book Three, or of the risks of its loquaciousness, as pronounced in *Benjamin minor*. Here the focus is on its creativity:

> But of the promptness of imagination and the easiness of its faculty, what shall we say or what can we properly say about it, imagination that in such speed depicts an image of all the things which the mind suggests to it? Whatever the mind draws from the

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[85] *Benjamin Maior* III, 18: 'Quam gratum, quam commodum, quam iucundum spectaculum secundum considerationem primam tot animae qualitates, tot eius cogitationes, tot ipsius affectiones in speculationem adducere et in eorum admiratione animum suspendere? O quam miranda speculatio, o quam stupenda delectatio iuxta considerationem secundam tot animi virtutes, tot eius exercitationes, tot eius studia vel merita prae oculis habere et eiusmodi contemplationi diutius inhaerere' (Aris, p. 77, ll. 3–9; PL 196, cols 127D–128A).

[86] *Benjamin Maior* III, 20 (Aris, pp. 78–79; PL 196, col. 129A–D).

[87] *Benjamin Maior* III, 21: 'Quis enim digne pensare, quis sufficienter aestimare valeat, quis in eius considerationis admiratione non expavescat, si diligenter attendat, quae sit illa tam multiplex cogitationis humanae volubilitas, quae sit eius tam inquieta et infatigabilis velocitas, quae per tam multa, tam varia et tam infinita discurrit, quae nulla hora, nullo temporis momento quiescit, quae tot spatia locorum, quae tot volumina temporum in tanta festinatione pertransit, cui undique patet tam facilis transitus, tam agilis discursus de summis ad ima, de imis ad summa, de primis ad novissima, de novissimis ad prima' (Aris, p. 79, ll. 19–26; PL 196, cols 129D–130A).

outside by hearing, whatever it conceives from the inside by pure thought, the imagination forms the whole without delay by representation, laying aside all difficulty, and it represents the forms of whatever things you like, in wondrous haste. What is it, I ask, to effect pictures of so many things in a moment, in a blink of the eye and then again to delete them with the same ease or to vary them many times in this and that way? Does not the mind daily create a new heaven and a new earth whenever it wishes, and in that fantastical world, as a second creator, activate and form as it likes creatures as great as it wishes of that sort every hour?[88]

In his consideration of things pertaining to the divine, Richard will come back to this creative role of the imagination, to cast some further light on divine creation. Man, created after the image of God, can create limitless forms of things in his imagination.[89]

   Man's potential is not exhausted by imagination. Richard pursues his praise of human faculties by drawing attention to man's natural capacity, his *ingenium*, which provides access to things that cannot be attained by corporeal sense:

See how that keenness of man's natural capacity is accustomed to investigate deep things, to penetrate what lays inside, to unroll, to unfold, to illuminate and call into the light things that are covered, obscure and wrapped in darkness. […] Consider how many disciplines of knowledge it has found, how it comprehends so many arts, and then you will begin to be stupefied and be overwhelmed by too much admiration.[90]

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[88] *Benjamin Maior* III, 21: 'Sed de imaginationis agilitate facultatisque eius facilitate quid nos dicturi sumus vel quid inde digne dicere possumus, quae omnium eorum, quae animus suggerit, in tanta velocitate imaginem depingit? Quidquid a foris animus per auditum haurit, quidquid ab intus ex sola cogitatione concipit, totum imaginatio absque mora et omni difficultate seposita per repraesentationem format et quarumlibet rerum formas sub mira festinatione repraesentat. Quale, quaeso, est tot rerum atque tantarum in momento, in ictu oculi picturas efficere et iterum easdem eadem facilitate delere vel alio atque alio modo multipliciter variare? Nonne per imaginationem animus cotidie novum caelum, novam terram, cum voluerit, creat et in illo phantastico mundo quasi alius quidam creator quantaslibet eiusmodi generis creaturas omni hora actitat et pro arbitrio format?' (Aris, p. 79, l. 26 – p. 80, l. 3; PL 196, col. 130AB).

[89] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 20: 'Si miraris quomodo ille omnium opifex Deus tot et tam varias rerum species, prout voluit, in ipso mundi exordio ex nihilo in actum produxit, cogita, quam sit humanae animae facile omni hora quaslibet rerum figuras per imaginationem fingere et quasdam quasi sui generis creaturas quoties voluerit sine praeiacenti materia et velut ex nihilo formare, et incipiet minus esse mirabile, quod prius forte videbatur incredibile' (Aris, p. 115, ll. 21–25; PL 196, col. 162A).

[90] *Benjamin Maior* III, 21: 'Vide quam multa, immo paene infinita humano ingenio pervia sunt, quae nullo umquam corporeo sensu attingi possunt. Vide quomodo illud humani ingenii acumen soleat profunda investigare, intima quaeque penetrare, involuta, perplexa, obscura et in tenebris posita evolvere, enodare, illustrare et in lucem evocare. […] Attende quot scientiae disciplinas invenerit, quomodo tot artes includerit, et tunc incipies obstupescere et ex nimia admiratione deficere' (Aris, p. 80, ll. 4–12; PL 196, col. 130C).

The capacity and extent of memory is equally admirable—incorporating the divisions and categories of philosophy:

> How great, I ask, is that bosom of such immense amplitude, which comprehends in its broad compass the substances of so many things, the forms of so many substances, so many kinds of things, so many species of kinds, so many individual things of species, even so many properties of individual things, so many qualities, so many quantities, so many actions and passions, positions, places, and times, and hides them and guards them and brings them forward again after long guarding?[91]

Finally, there is understanding, which brings everything together in contemplation.[92]

As a third step in the contemplation of the length and the width of the mercy seat Richard considers the will and the mind's dispositions (*affectus*). Here once again, there is wonder rather than contempt, but this wonder is informed by a sense of fragility and vulnerability. There is so much variation in the ways the mind is affected. The mind can even be touched by contradictory feelings in one moment, and turn from one extreme to the other, as Richard evokes in a vivid description:

> It rises up in trust, then falls down in diffidence; is fixed in constancy, then suddenly shaken by fear. […] How often we see how in the middle of wonderful exultation of our joy some cause of sadness suddenly emerges and shakes the mind furiously and casts it down. […] When a man raises to courage, you will see him often hold even death in contempt and have no fear in the greatest dangers. But later you will see the same person in the still of the night be suddenly alarmed and lose his constancy at the merest breeze, at the movement of a twig or even at the fall of a leaf.[93]

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[91] *Benjamin Maior* III, 21: 'Quantus, quaeso, est ille tam immensae amplitudinis sinus, qui tot rerum substantias, tot substantiarum formas, tot genera rerum, tot species generum, tot individua specierum, individuorum vero tot proprietates, tot qualitates, tot quantitates, actiones et passiones, habitus, situs, loca et tempora latitudinis suae ambitu comprehendit, abscondit atque custodit diuque custodita iterum in medium producit?' (Aris, p. 80, ll. 14–19; PL 196, col. 130D).

[92] *Benjamin Maior* III, 21: 'Quidquid enim sensus attingit, cogitatio parit; quidquid imaginatio format, ingenium investigat, memoria conservat. Horum omnium notitiam intelligentia capit et, cum libuerit, in considerationem admittit vel in contemplationem adducit' (Aris, p. 80, ll. 24–27; PL 196, col. 131A).

[93] *Benjamin Maior* III, 22: 'Cogitet quisque quibus perturbationibus cotidie animus suus afficitur. […] Modo se in fiduciam erigit, modo in diffidentiam cadit, nunc per constantiam figitur, nunc subitaneo timore concutitur? […] Quam saepe videmus inter mira gratulationis nostrae tripudia, quomodo superveniens subitoque emergens tristitiae causa animum vehementer concutit ac deicit et omnem illam exsultantis animi solemnitatem subito in maerorem vertit. […] Cum se in audaciam erexerit, videbis eum saepe etiam mortem comtemnere et inter summa pericula nihil trepidationis habere. Eundem autem ipsum videbis postmodum inter nocturna silentia ad tenuem flatum, ad unius ramusculi motum seu etiam foliorum lapsum subito trepidare et animi constantiam perdere' (Aris, p. 80, l. 33 – p. 81, l. 2; ll. 7–9; ll. 23–28; PL 196, cols 131B–132A).

These passages illustrate how man brings his own material, of *cogitationes*, and of *affectiones*, to the composition of his life. In the next stage, Richard admires the power of deliberation to turn so many affections into virtues, as far as it puts them in order by discretion and fixes them in a good intention.[94] Richard then turns his attention to the role of grace: in the end, the harmony to which he had alluded in the beginning of this book, is only brought about by the Holy Spirit, who for the chosen ones 'regulates the multiple and multiform affects of the human heart and forms them into one harmony, and with the plectrum of his grace, stretching some, relaxing others, he adjusts them together so they sound together in harmony.' [95] This role of grace is not beyond the reach of this contemplation; rather, it is an integral part of it: 'If we have our senses exercised in these five stages of contemplation, we have indeed completed our mercy seat according to the example of the divine design',[96] so Richard concludes this exercise in self-knowledge, the necessary door or ladder to yet higher things.

The last two contemplations, the subject of Book Four, are represented by the cherubim. As the material gains in value and the described parts of the ark are more and more honourable, contemplation goes from the lower to the highest point: the divine. To express this point, beyond the reach of human possibilities of reasoning, it is represented not by a human, but by an angelic form. The cherubim are made from pure gold: even more than in the realm of the fourth contemplation, concerning the human spirit, Richard emphasizes that in these last two sorts of contemplation no role is left for the imagination, or for any corporeal likeness: 'What can imagination do where reason itself succumbs?'[97] However, even the highest levels of contemplation, where the domain of imagination has been left behind long before, can be expressed only by way of images: the contemplation which transcends human capacities has to be expressed not by a human but by an angelic figure.[98]

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[94] *Benjamin Maior* III, 23 (Aris, pp. 82–83; PL 196, cols 132A–133B).

[95] *Benjamin Maior* III, 24: 'Superius iam assignavimus, quam sint multiplices vel multiformes humani cordis affectus. Hos utique ille Domini Spiritus cotidie in electis suis paulatim contemperat et in unam harmoniam conformat et gratiae suae plectro quasi citharoeda doctissimus hos extendendo, illos relaxando, ad concordem quandam consonantiam coaptat' (Aris, p. 84, ll. 28–32; PL 196, col. 134CD).

[96] *Benjamin Maior* III, 24: 'Si in his ergo quinque huius contemplationis gradibus exercitatos sensus habemus, si ad eiusmodi speculationes prompti et proni sumus, profecto propitiatorium nostrum iuxta propositum divini documenti modum explevimus' (Aris, p. 85, ll. 4–7; PL 196, cols 135A–136A).

[97] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 4: 'Quid enim imaginatio possit, ubi ratio succumbit?' (Aris, p. 89, l. 19; PL 196, col. 138B).

[98] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 1: 'Constat itaque supra hominem esse et humanae rationis modum vel capacitatem excedere, quae ad haec duo novissima contemplationum genera videntur pertinere. Unde oportuit ea ad similitudinis expressionem non tam humana quam angelica effigie repraesentare' (Aris, p. 86, ll. 22–25; PL 196, col. 135D). This is congruous with what

Besides, for all the elevated status of this contemplation, the connection with day-to-day monastic practice is clear: the cherubim are beaten works, made by hammering, and much beating. In this work, inner compunction is needed more than deep investigation.[99] All the various vicissitudes of monastic life are evoked:

> O, with how much prudence, how much foresight the material for our work has to be formed. Hence with respect to love of the divine, hence with respect to fear of the divine, it has to be moderated, so that the mind does not dissolve in too much self-confidence in consideration of divine mercy, or, hardened into despair by immoderate looking to divine severity, slowly becomes lukewarm and totally diffident about the completion of the work undertaken. With how much prudence and circumspection one has to watch and insist that not any digression (*excessus*) of the mind or wandering of thought escapes our acute discretion.[100]

Presumption and despair, discretion and the need to concentrate—the very fabric of monastic life (as we shall discuss more thoroughly later in this chapter)—underlie the refined and elusive figures of the cherubim.

The cherubim, who can see God, express in a figural way the fullness of knowledge. Forming the cherubim is different from making the rest of the ark, and much more difficult, depending on revelation and grace:

> But who can be found to be a worthy artisan, unless divine grace comes before and helps him? […] How can I express that form which I cannot see? Even Moses would

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was quoted before (n. 67) from the same chapter, *Benjamin Maior* IV, 1: 'Libet sane huic descriptioni vehementer intendere et doctrinae nostrae regulam ex proposita similitudine sumere et iuxta descriptionis huius formulam operis nostri formam vel modum excudere' (Aris, p. 86, ll. 8–11; PL 196, col. 135B). See also *Benjamin Maior* IV, 5: 'Si ergo Cherubim plenitudo scientiae dicitur, vide quam recte illa extrema operis nostri factura Cherubim nominatur, in qua scientiae omnis summi gradus figuraliter exprimuntur' (Aris, p. 90, ll. 21–23; PL 196, col. 139AB). Compare Sicard, *Diagrammes médiévaux*, p. 248, note 211, who argues that, after leaving images behind in contemplation, the return to images makes possible an expression of the experience (more adequately than a discourse could do, because they enable the reader to attach his own signification to them).

[99] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 6: 'Ductile sane feriendo producitur et crebris ictibus multaque tunsione ad destinatam formam paulatim promovetur. Puto ergo quia opus est in hoc opere intima potius compunctione quam profunda investigatione' (Aris, p. 91, ll. 7–9; PL 196, col. 139D).

[100] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 6: 'O quanta prudentia, o quanta providentia formanda illa operis nostri materia. Hinc divini amoris, hinc divini timoris respectu est temperanda, ne nimio divinae propitiationis respectu animus resolutus in nimiam sui confidentiam liquescat vel immoderato divinae severitatis intuitu obduratus usque in desperationem paulatim tepescat et de praesumpti operis consummatione penitus diffidat. O quam prudenti circumspectione, o quam frequenti increpatione oportet invigilare vel insistere, ne ullus mentis excessus vel cogitationis evagatio discretionis perspicaciam lateat' (Aris, p. 91, l. 26 – p. 92, l. 2; PL 196, col. 140BC).

not have been able to express how this part of the ark should be built, if he had not learned about it before in revelation. […] It is thus necessary to ascend to the height of one's heart (*cor altum*) and to learn by an *excessus mentis*, by divine revelation, what it is one must sigh for and to what sublime attitude one must compose and accustom one's mind.[101]

Part of the distance claimed here between the human and the divine is immediately repealed when the distinction is made between the two cherubim, the one standing on the right side, pointing to the likeness of man and God, as was indicated already in Book Four; the other on the left side: the side where every likeness fails and things are not only beyond but also against reason.

In histories of mysticism the last two stages of contemplation have received the most attention, as leading to the point of transcending oneself and unification unattainable for man by his own powers.[102] However, in an attentive reading of the text, the allusions to something beyond the reach of human comprehension and artisanship are continually compounded with very day-to-day concerns, at least in the monastic sense. Even in this ultimate state Richard talks about composing one's mind as a preparation, and of the work of recollection afterwards: once one has been admitted to this 'angelic glory of sublimity', afterwards 'with what assiduous recollection, what joyful admiration, one considers again and again […] longing for it, sighing for it, contemplating it, until one is finally transformed in the same image'(II Corinthians 3. 18).[103] And although the reader is not to use the imagination, Richard returns to the language of images, be it those of less and less material substance, to express how the imagination is to be transcended: 'We are told to produce the cherubim and to figure the images not of humans, nor even of

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[101] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 7: 'Quis ad haec opera dignus artifex invenitur, nisi eum divina gratia praeveniat et subsequatur? […] Sed Cherubim quis vidit quisve videre possit? Et quomodo illam formam exprimere valeam, quam videre non valeo? Puto quia nec Moyses ad illam exprimendam sufficeret, nisi antea et ipse per revelationem didicisset. […] Necesse est itaque ad cor altum ascendere et per mentis excessum ex dominica revelatione addiscere, quid sit illud, ad quod suspirare vel studere oporteat et ad qualem sublimitatis habitum animum suum componere et assuescere debeat' (Aris, p. 92, ll. 21–22; ll. 25–28; l. 31 – p. 93, l. 1; PL 196, col. 141AB).

[102] See for example Kurt Ruh, *Geschichte der abendländischen Mystik. Band I: Die grundlegung durch die Kirchenväter und die Mönchstheologie des 12. Jahrhundert* (München: C. H. Beck, 1990), p. 402.

[103] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 7: 'Nam si semel ad lucifluam illam angelicae sublimationis gloriam admissus fuerit et ad illud divinorum radiorum spectaculum intrare meruerit, quam intimis desideriis, quam profundis suspiriis, quam inenarrabilibus gemitibus eum, qui eiusmodi est, putamus insistere, quam assidua recordatione, quam iucunda admiratione inspectam claritatem credimus eum retractare menteque revolvere illam desiderando, illam suspirando, illam contemplando, donec tandem aliquando *in eandem imaginem* transformetur *a claritate in claritatem tamquam a Domini Spiritu*' (Aris, p. 93, ll. 2–8; PL 196, col. 141BC).

any angels, but of those all surpassing spirits, that the dignity of these last forms of speculation shine out better from the adumbration of such a *figura*.'[104]

What unfolds next, in a procedure often employed by Richard, is a many layered narration, with new vistas opening up successively and integrating more and more biblical stories and texts. These two sorts of contemplation protect us against evil and strengthen us in virtue. This is expressed when it is said that they cover both sides of the mercy seat by spreading their wings, which means that the reader is intent on contemplation:

> The cherubim cover the sides of the mercy seat sufficiently, when they spread their wings sufficiently and incessantly: what is spreading one's wings other than that one is always and everywhere cleaving to divine contemplation and everywhere persists in such an endeavour and desire? […] Likewise we must spread the wings of our heart through our desire and be ready for the hour of divine revelation at any moment.[105]

Within the frame of his description of the cherubim Richard now introduces the stories of Abraham in the opening of his tent (Genesis 18. 1), and Elijah in the opening of the cave, waiting for the arrival of the Lord (I Kings 19. 11-13). Elijah sees the Lord in passing, while Abraham goes out to him and introduces him into his place. On the one hand, Elijah, waiting for the Lord, refers to

> a subtle understanding of divine ordering and the grace of his co-operation in the things that go on around one by divine providence; when an earthquake follows a strong wind, a fire the earthquake, a light voice the fire, the presence of God is perceived, because often when the mind feels itself totally shaken suddenly by great disturbances and, now dejected by fear, then melt out by sorrow or confused by shame, and then again beyond hope and expectation composed to great tranquillity of mind or even security, whether it wills it or not it ponders the working of grace and acknowledges as more clearly than light that these things happen by divine providence.[106]

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[104] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 7: 'Iubemur itaque Cherubim producere et non modo hominum non demum quorumlibet angelorum, sed superexcellentium spirituum imagines figurare, ut harum novissimarum speculationum dignitas melius elucescat ex eiusmodi figurativa adumbratione' (Aris, p. 93, ll. 18–21; PL 196, col. 141D).

[105] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 10: 'Sed tunc procul dubio designati Cherubim propitiatorii latera sufficienter tegunt, si alas suas sufficienter et indesinenter expandunt. Quid est alas suas continua expansione distendere, nisi omni in loco, omni in tempore divinae contemplationi inhaerere et eiusmodi studio vel desiderio ubique insistere? […] Sic sane debemus et nos cordis nostri alas per desiderium extendere et divinae revelationis horam sub omni hora, immo sub omni momento exspectare' (Aris, p. 97, ll.4–10; PL 196, col. 145A).

[106] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 11: 'Quid autem est de habitaculo suo in Domini transitum attendere, nisi de his, quae circa se divinitus geruntur, divinae dispositionis moderamen cooperationisque eius gratiam subtiliter intelligere? Dum enim spiritum vehementem commotio, commotionem ignis, ignem sibilus aurae levis sequitur, transeuntis Domini praesentia deprehenditur, quia dum mens magnis mirisque quibusdam perturbationibus subito

Here divine presence, in its passing, seems to be brought about on the level of affections which are such a common part of the religious profession. On the other hand, he who, as it were, like Abraham, goes out of his tent towards the Lord, and sees him face to face, is the person who 'by ecstasy of mind led out of himself contemplates the light of the highest wisdom without any covering or figural adumbration, at the end not through a glass darkly, but, if I may say so, in simple truth'.[107] This *excessus* is followed by a process whereby one draws what one saw into one's mind and makes it comprehensible, to oneself and to others, by much discussion and with the help of reasoning and similitudes.[108] Reason and similitude are all the reader has to follow this process, and Richard illustrates this in using the similitudes of biblical stories.

Even the limits to this discussion are made the subject of the contemplative exegesis of the story, and thus, on the level of contemplation, they are somehow incorporated. The first time Abraham goes out towards the Lord, he compels him to enter. The second time, after he has followed him out, he does not make him enter: the vision from outside is not drawn inwards, when it is seen that, the more the contemplative revelation is discussed according to human reason, the more it defies human opinion.[109]

Next, inside the *figurae* of Abraham and Elijah, another *figura* is interwoven: that of the bride from the Canticle. 'The soul must always yearn as the bride for the arrival of her bridegroom. She must always be found ready, that the bridegroom does not find her less decorated, or, left outside, has to bear delay.'[110] Again, an

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saepe sentit se totam concuti et modo nimio timore deici, modo nimio dolore excoqui vel pudore confundi et iterum praeter spem et aestimationem ad magnam animi tranquillitatem seu etiam securitatem componi, velit nolit visitantis gratiae operationem perpendit et divinitus haec actitari luce clarius agnoscit' (Aris, p. 99, ll. 6–15; PL 196, cols 146D–147A).

[107] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 11: 'Sed ille quasi de tabernaculo in advenientis Domini occursum egreditur, egressus autem quasi facie ad faciem intuetur, qui per mentis excessum extra semetipsum ductus summae sapientiae lumen sine aliquo involucro figurarumve adumbratione, denique non per speculum et in aenigmate, sed in simplici, ut sic dicam, veritate contemplatur' (Aris, p. 99, ll. 19–23; PL 196, col. 147AB).

[108] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 11: 'Exterius visum introrsum trahit, quando id, quod per excessum vidit, multa retractatione vehementique discussione capabile seu etiam comprehensibile sibi efficit et tum rationum attestatione, tum similitudinum adaptatione ad communem intelligentiam deducit' (Aris, p. 99, ll. 23–26; PL 196, col. 147B).

[109] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 12: 'Exterius visus minime introducitur, quando theorica revelatio quanto magis iuxta humanam rationem discutitur, eo amplius omni humanae opinioni adversari videtur' (Aris, p. 101, ll. 11–13; PL 196, col. 148D).

[110] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 13: 'Semper debet anima sancta et veri sponsi amica ad dilecti sui adventum summo cum desiderio inhiare parata semper et vocanti occurrere et pulsanti aperire. Debet, inquam, semper in hoc sollicita esse et parata inveniri, ne subito et inopinate adveniens

additional voice is heard in this story: 'Troublesome and to someone burning with desire burdensome are the words: Command, command again, command, command again; wait, wait again, a little bit here, a little bit there'[111]—these words, in Isaiah 28. 10 ascribed to God by the drunkards of Ephraim, are here 'the words of a lazy soul, of a lukewarm soul, not cautious enough and too unthankful'.[112] Then again the well-known voices of the bridegroom and the bride take over, the bridegroom outside: 'Open to me, my sister, my friend', and the bride saying: '"I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on […]." Let him wait a little, if he wants that I receive him: he knocks and asks to be let in, and you say: let him wait, see he waits […]'—with the risk that he will go away.[113] Expertly Richard weaves the themes together:

> O how much better it would be, that you would keep watch outside, that with Abraham or Elijah you would await the arrival of your lover […]. You should, as the dove of your beloved in the clefts of a rock, in the hole of a wall, look outside, your wings suspended and your neck stretched […]. But maybe our cherubim do not yet have wings, or if they have them, they have not spread them. Maybe we have not yet formed our work fully; maybe we have not yet accomplished completely that angelic form according to the divine notion.[114]

Richard is, as we know from his Introduction, talking to people who have time for these stories inside stories, but their *otiositas*, it becomes clear, does not allow for insouciance:

> I remain silent about the people outside […]. But what about us, who have taken the religious life, the ones freed for spiritual exercises […] who have no other function

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minus comptam, minus ornatam inveniat vel diu exclusus diutinae praestolationis ullam molestiam sustineat' (Aris, p. 101, l. 30 – p. 102, l. 2; PL 196, col. 149B).

[111] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 13: 'Molesta satis verba aestuantique desiderio multum onerosa. *Manda, remanda, manda, remanda; exspecta reexspecta, modicum ibi, modicum ibi*' (Aris, p. 102, ll. 2–4; PL 196, col. 149B).

[112] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 13: 'Verba sunt sane animae pigrae, animae tepidae, minus circumspectae et nimis ingratae' (Aris, p. 102, ll. 4–5; PL 196, col. 149B).

[113] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 13: '*Aperi mihi, soror mea, amica mea […]. Exspoliavi me,* inquit*, tunica mea, quomodo induar illa?[…]* Exspectet tamen modicum, si vult, ut suscipiam illum: pulsat et introitum postulat, et dicis: Exspecta, ecce exspectat' (Aris, p. 102, ll. 21–22; ll. 25–27; PL 196, cols 149D–150A).

[114] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 13: 'O quanto satius, o quanto rectius foret, ut pro foribus observares, ut cum Abraham vel Elia dilectoris tui adventum exspectares, advenienti occurreres et cum exsultatione susciperes. Deberes sane sicuti dilecti tui columba *in foraminibus petrae, in cavernis maceriae* suspensis alis colloque protenso foras prospicere […]. Sed forte adhuc nostri Cherubim alas non habent vel si habent, expansas non habent. Nondum fortassis opus nostrum ad plenum formavimus, necdum formam illam angelicam ex integro iuxta dominicam sententiam consummavimus' (Aris, p. 103, ll. 12–20; PL 196, col. 150D).

imposed upon us than to read, sing and pray, speculate and contemplate, be free and see how sweet is the Lord (Vulgate Psalm 33. 9; compare Psalm 34. 8). Should we not be ashamed to say the same and to tire our beloved with such words? […] Daily, if I am not wrong, you, who apply yourself to reading and meditation, you receive his messengers, you know his commandments. As often as we draw out some new understanding from the hidden recesses of scripture, what else is it than that we receive messengers from our beloved.[115]

The desired presence is thus linked with exactly the process of reading and exegetical interpretation: scripture offers its different layers of meanings as just as many messengers and commandments, and looking for ever new meanings is asking for ever new commandments.

The slightest delay is burdensome to the beloved, a delay caused by vain thoughts and affections. They have to be thrown out of the house 'so that we can cling to the embraces of our Beloved the more freely, the more joyfully'.[116] The following shows a typical change of perspective, from the prophetic (self-) reproaches about delay to the intimacy of longing and waiting in the scenery of the Canticle:

> How much delay, I ask, is there in such waiting, and how often is it to be repeated, a little bit here, a little bit there; a little bit in the garden, a little bit in the hall, a little bit in the chamber, until finally sometimes after much waiting, after much weariness, he enters the bedchamber and occupies the most inward and most secret place.[117]

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[115] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 14: 'Taceo de illis, qui foris sunt, qui spiritualem dilectionem necdum scire potuerunt […] Sed de his interim tacentes, quid de nobis, obsecro, dicturi sumus, qui habitum religionis suscepimus, qui spiritualibus exercitiis mancipati sumus, qui divinae dilectionis assidue quasdam velut arrhas accipimus? Maxime tamen nos quid, quaeso, dicemus, qui nihil aliud iniuncti officii habemus nisi legere, psallere et orare, meditari, speculari et contemplari, vacare et videre quam suavis est dominus? […] Cotidie, ni fallor, vos, qui lectioni vel meditationi insistitis, eius nuntios suscipitis, mandata cognoscitis. Quoties ex abditis scripturarum recessibus novos intellectus eruimus, quid aliud quam quosdam dilecti nostri nuntios excipimus?' (Aris, p. 103, l. 23; p. 104, ll. 2–7, 9–12; PL 196, cols 150D to 151AB).

[116] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 15: 'Quoniam vero singularis amor solitudinem amat, solitarium locum requirit, totam huiusmodi turbam nec solummodo cogitationum verum etiam affectionum, oportet eicere, ut dilecti nostri amplexibus quanto liberius, tanto iucundius liceat inhaerere' (Aris, p. 106, ll. 2–5; PL 196, col. 153A).

[117] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 15: 'Quanto quaeso in eiusmodi exspectatione moram quotiesve repetendum, exspecta, reexspecta, modicum ibi, modicum ibi? Modicum in uno loco, modicum in alio. Modicum in horto, modicum in vestibulo, modicum in thalamo, donec tandem aliquando post multam exspectationem, post multam fatigationem cubiculum introeat et intimum atque secretissimum locum obtineat' (Aris, p. 106, ll. 5–9; PL 196, col. 153AB).

From now on the roles are reversed and it is the bride who cannot bear any delay. She waits, with Abraham and Elijah in the entrance of her dwelling, so that she is always ready to receive her beloved. Richard now reconnects these stories to the original text: 'In that moment, I think, our beaten work begins to make considerable progress, because our cherubim begin to extend their wings more widely and as it were to suspend themselves for flying at every hour.'[118]

The whole is like a triple fugue—with the drunkenness to which the bridegroom invites his friends ('eat my friends, drink, and become inebriated') intertwined in it at the end—and concluding with its first theme when Richard once more returns to the cherubim:

> If we want to have this drunkenness and have these contemplative ecstasies of mind, we must try to love our God inwardly and above all and strive with desire towards the joy of divine contemplation in every hour, and this will be our cherubim having their wings expanded.[119]

The mutual position of the cherubim is further explored: divine unity, the object of the fifth sort of contemplation, does not go against reason even when reason cannot comprehend it; the Trinity and the unity of divinity and humanity in Christ, in the sixth sort of contemplation, are subjects above and against reason.[120] The relation of the last two contemplations to the other kinds is explored and this serves to introduce the topic that will be developed in the last book, where Richard will once more circle around contemplation. After having treated all six sorts of contemplation, Richard emphasizes that not only can the two last kinds be seen in an *excessus mentis*, but that all sorts can be had in different ways, and all six kinds of contemplation can happen in the mode of *alienatio*.[121] Moses, who saw the ark, represents alienation by divine revelation. Bezalel, the maker of the ark, shows how contemplation can happen without alienation:

> What indeed, I ask, is it, to make the ark, to plate it with gold and surround it with a crown, to cover it with the mercy seat, to add two cherubim, what else but to gradually acquire skill in the said kinds of contemplation and with much study and effort gain

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[118] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 15: 'Sub hoc tempore, ut arbitror, illud opus nostrum ductile incipit non mediocriter proficere et consummationi appropinquare, eo quod illi nostri Cherubim incipiant alas suas iam latius extendere et sese iam quasi ad volatum omni hora suspendere' (Aris, p. 107, ll. 2–5; PL 196, col. 154A).

[119] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 16: 'Si igitur concupiscimus hac ebrietate madere et hos mentis theoricos excessus frequentare, satagamus Deum nostrum intime et summe diligere et omni hora in divinae contemplationis gaudium summo cum desiderio anhelare: et hoc erit nostros Cherubim expansas alas habere' (Aris, p. 108, l. 35 – p. 109, l. 2; PL 196, col. 155D).

[120] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 17–18 (Aris, pp. 109–113; PL 196, cols 156A–160B).

[121] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 22 (Aris, pp. 118–120; PL 196, cols 164C–166C).

more and more knowledge and to put that knowledge to use and finally to sometimes accomplish the work and in the end be perfect in all?[122]

Even the two cherubim, usually associated with *alienatio mentis*, 'at some time are accustomed to be contained by the limits of human comprehension'.[123] And of the people who are led above themselves, to some this happens completely by grace, as the revelation of the ark happened to Moses; others, represented by Aaron, have it more or less in their power, by their own effort, to 'enter the Holiest of the tabernacle and see under that veil the ark of God'.[124]

In Book Five Richard elaborates on these different modes, completing, as it were, the circle with which he began in his introduction, when he defined the place of contemplation in relation to thinking (*cogitatio*) and meditation. In this last book, he considers the three ways in which contemplation can happen, in degrees of increasing dependence on divine grace: *dilatatio*, *sublevatio* and *alienatio*. *Dilatatio* is 'when the sharp point of the mind is expanded more widely and is sharpened more eagerly, but nowhere transcends the measure of human activity'.[125] *Elevatio* occurs when 'the liveliness of the understanding is irradiated by God and transcends the mode of human activity, without ending in *alienatio*.'[126] *Alienatio* happens 'when the memory of things present disappears from the mind and transcends by a transfiguration of divine working into some strange state of mind, impassable to

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[122] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 22: 'Quid enim, quaeso, est arcam fabricare, auro vestire coronaque cingere, propitiatorio tegere, Cherubim adiungere, nisis gradatim quidem in dicta contemplationum genera artem comparare et multo studio atque labore alia post alia addiscere et in usum adducere et tandem aliquando opus consummare et ad ultimum in omnibus perfectum esse?' (Aris, p. 120, ll. 11–15; PL 196, col. 166B).

[123] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 22: 'Unde et manifeste datur intelligi, quia et illa novissima duo contemplationum genera, quibus quasi proprium esse videtur per mentis excessum exerceri, solent tamen quandoque infra humanae comprehensibilitatis metas cohiberi' (Aris, p. 120, ll. 17–20; PL 196, col. 166BC).

[124] *Benjamin Maior* IV, 23: 'Aaron autem iam ex magna parte in potestate habebat, quoties idipsum ordo vel ratio poscebat, in sancta sanctorum intrare et intra ipsum velum arcam Domini videre' (Aris, p. 121, ll. 5–7; PL 196, cols 166D–167A).

[125] *Benjamin Maior* V, 2: 'Mentis dilatatio est quando animi acies latius expanditur et vehementius acuitur, modum tamen humanae industriae nullatenus supergreditur' (Aris, p. 124, ll. 20–22; PL 196, col. 170A). On these modes see Jean Châtillon, 'Les trois modes de la contemplation selon Richard de Saint-Victor', *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique*, 41 (1940), 3–26.

[126] *Benjamin Maior* V, 2, p. 124, 22–23: 'Mentis sublevatio est quando intelligentiae vivacitas divinitus irradiata humanae industriae metas transcendit nec tamen in mentis alienationem transit' (Aris, p. 124, ll. 22–23; PL 196, col. 170A).

human activity'.[127] It is the last *modus*, the *alienatio*, or *excessus mentis*, which has been privileged in later readings of Richard. However, in structural terms, it forms only a small part of the whole. And, more importantly, transcending oneself does not annul the preceding process, and is not the end. After the *excessus mentis* one can only return to one's mind, to enter once more into the dynamics of memory drawing down grace:

> When one who arrives at this privilege, feels it being withdrawn more than usual, there is something he should do […]. Thus the mind that is such must by the heart's own meditations repair in itself the exultation and recall before the eyes of its recollection the gifts of divine favours bestowed upon it […]. When thus the most inner affection of the heart by such efforts is set free by full devotion in the greatness of divine confession, what else is this than that, if I may say so, a little air-hole is opened by which an outpouring of celestial sweetness and an abundance of divine delight is poured into that little vase of our heart.[128]

Whatever the role of divine grace and the acknowledgement of human limits, they are drawn into the contemplation of the reader, unhurriedly turning in upon itself: 'leisured, we have spoken to the leisured'. [129]

Work in Progress, or Digression and Concentration: De exterminatione mali et promotione boni

Although the epistemological process in *Benjamin maior* is presented as a hierarchical affair, it is not a straightforward development. Taking their point of departure from biblical texts, Richard's treatises, often full of dramatic potency, reflect and direct an important characteristic of monastic life and its learning process: the exegesis—the explication of the text, in the literal sense of unfolding

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[127] *Benjamin Maior* V, 2: 'Mentis alienatio est quando praesentium memoria menti excidit et in peregrinum quendam et humanae industriae invium animi statum divinae operationis transfiguratione transit' (Aris, p. 124, ll. 24–27; PL 196, col. 170A).

[128] *Benjamin Maior* V, 17: 'Verumtamen qui ad hanc gratiam profecit, cum eam sibi ultra solitum subtrahi iam sentit, est quod facere debeat, unde ad eam reparandam multum per omnem modum adiuvari valeat et unde animum suum in id negotii, quantum in se est, idoneum efficiat. Debet itaque animus, qui eiusmodi est, propriis meditationibus cordis in se exsultationem reparare et impensa sibi divinorum beneficiorum munera ante recordationis suae oculos revocare […]. Dum itaque huiusmodi studiis intima cordis affectio in divinae confessionis magnificentiam plena devotione resolvitur, quid aliud quam quoddam, ut ita dicam, spiraculum aperitur, per quod in illud cordis nostri vasculum caelestis dulcedinis emanatio divinaeque suavitatis abundantia infundatur' (Aris, p. 146, ll. 3–14; PL 196, col. 189BC).

[129] *Benjamin Maior* V, 19: 'otiosi otiosis locuti sumus' (Aris, p. 148, l. 33; PL 196, col. 192C).

and digressing and returning to the text—reflects the non-linear character of this life. There is no question of a straightforward way from beginning to end, but there are progressions and setbacks. However much linked to the process of reading and meditation, divine presence is uncertain. In other works, uncertainty and ambivalence are emphasized even more as important characteristics of monastic life. Its constant vicissitudes and the fragility of the ultimate moment of contemplation loom large, for instance, in *De exterminatione mali et promotione boni* (*On the extermination of evil and the promotion of good*), where the *figura* of the composition is the psalm: 'What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest, thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back' (Vulgate Psalm 113. 5; AV Psalm 114. 5).[130] This text evokes a flow of images connected with the exodus of Israel from Egypt: the waters of the Red Sea dividing to let the Jews pass through; the arrival at the Promised Land under Joshua; the waters of Jordan being cut off and then returned to their source; the memorials that were built (Joshua 3). Every aspect of the text is exploited. Take, for example, the position of the sea with regard to the reader: some have the sea before them, some next to them, some behind them; like the Israelites who first had the sea before them (as an impediment) then next to them (as a defence) and then behind (as a confirmation of their security). The sea, Richard explains, is before us when we fear perils of the future; next to us, by the labour of the struggles we have to wage; behind us, by sadness because of the evil we did.[131]

In another reading, Richard takes the opportunity to digress on the intermediate position of life in this world. This life is the way to future life. For he who grieves for the things in this life, to him the sea is in the way; he who grieves for the things outside this life has the sea at his sides. In this life there is good and evil, but in the future life there is either only good, or only evil. These two extremes have no common ground at all. This life, having both good and evil, 'lies in between the two, by its good things it is joined to the one extreme as by a figurative likeness (*umbratili similitudine*), just as by its evil it is associated to the evils of that life through a prefiguring affinity (*imaginaria affinitate*)'.[132] Grieving for eternal good

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[130] See also my 'Learning by Experience: Twelfth-Century Monastic Ideas' in *Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, ed. by Jan Willem Drijvers, Alasdair A. MacDonald (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 197–206.

[131] *De exterminatione mali et promotione boni* (hereafter *De exterminatione*) I, 8 (PL 196, cols 1077D–1078D).

[132] *De exterminatione* I, 9: 'In hac vita, et bona et mala; in illa vita, aut sola bona, aut sola mala. Itaque quae nulla sunt, multum a se differunt, et nulla se similitudinis vicinitate contingunt, eo quod inter ea chaos magnum firmatum sit, in quibus aliqua consimilis qualitatis proportio reperiri non possit. Sed haec vita inter illa quae futurae vitae sunt, bona sed (*sic*) mala quasi media interjacet, eo quod ad utraque seu hinc seu inde aliqua similitudine appropinquet, quae bona et mala permista habet. Illius igitur vitae bonis bonorum suorum (quamvis umbratili similitudine jungitur, sicut et vitae illius malis, malorum suorum) imaginaria affinitate sociatur' (PL 196, col. 1079A).

things brings the sea to our right side, when we fear to lose them; while sorrow for eternal evil stands for the fear to incur that evil: thus we are strengthened at both sides.

Another element of ambivalence is acknowledged when a lack of congruity is introduced between outward appearances and inner attitude. If someone wonders why so many people seem to have left Egypt, and yet cannot see the miracle of the sea fleeing, it is perhaps because these people practise outward change only—taking the habit, making their profession—but not undergoing real conversion. In other words, they change places without a change of heart.[133] Referring to the meaning of *Hebraeus* as 'one who is passing through' (*transiens*), Richard emphasizes that it takes several transitions to arrive in the Promised Land. The first transition takes only a day; the second transition involves much labour, many temptations, and even then it is only achieved by some.[134] It implies the experience of failure, of vices, of superfluous thoughts and desires, of self-esteem, all of which threatens to undo what has been achieved so far. In short, this is an endless work in progress:

> How often do we have to change, to strike camp, how many temptations do we have to suffer, we have to try every thing, to keep what is good, to abstain from evil. How often do we have to go and to return, to forget those things which are behind, to reach forth unto those things which are before, and [here Richard deviates from his Pauline text, Phillipians 3. 13] to return again, to take our own experience and to learn our weakness by our own failure.[135]

It is by a process of concentration, of economizing the *cogitationes*, that the profile of the reader becomes visible, that he will be able to compose his conscience and to reform the mind.[136] As Richard explained in *Benjamin minor*, one has to fix one's desire—*fige desiderium*—in the same way as the waters of Jordan were fixed in one

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[133] *De exterminatione* I, 11: 'An forte relinquunt saeculum professione, non autem et conversatione, habitu non affectu? […] Sed videte ne forte non sufficiat nobis et vobis mutasse locum non animum, saeculum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt' (PL 196, col. 1080A). Compare Horatius, *Epistolae* I, XI, 27: 'Caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt'.

[134] *De exterminatione* I, 12: 'Illud quasi modicum, quod modico tempore perficitur, hoc post multos labores, per multas tentationes vix tandem aliquando et a paucis consummatur' (PL 196, col. 1080B).

[135] *De exterminatione* I, 13: 'O quoties necesse est loca mutare, quam saepe castra figere, quot tentationes tolerare omnia, probare, quod bonum est tenere, abstinere ab omni specie mala! O quoties necesse est ire et reverti, et quae retro sunt oblivisci, et in anteriora extendi, et item post tergum redeundo capere experientiam sui, et per proprium defectum propriam infirmitatem edoceri!' (PL 196, col. 1080CD).

[136] *De exterminatione* I, 18: 'Sed postquam coeperint inferiores aquae decurrere aque (*sic*) deficere, et infimarum delectationum fluxus languescere atque evanescere, incipit et conscientia pariter ad pacem et tranquillitatem seipsam paulatim componere' (PL 196, col. 1086B).

place.[137] However, as the comparison implies, this is only a temporary state, and superfluous thoughts are the necessary background and the dynamic contrast to this concentration.

In the second part of *De exterminatione* the reversal of the Jordan to its source illustrates the curbing and bending of the affections,[138] changing human concupiscence into heavenly desires, guiding them, as it were, into the Promised Land. Again, the interdependence of reason and desire is obvious. The priests, holding the ark, are the first to enter the river, and upon touching the water with their feet the water recedes.[139] They stand, holding the ark, letting the people—the affections—pass first. The ark of investigation goes first as long as we are in the desert; but as to the land across Jordan (the realm that is beyond our understanding) we send the people (our desire) in first.[140] But even here explorers are sent out: without desire, there is no contemplation; without study, there is no desire.[141] The measure of distance to be kept between the priests and the people is significant also: two thousand cubits, meaning double perfection. But this distance must never be overcome. Even after much experience, one should not presume to have even begun to reach perfection.[142] This ever-receding character of the goal, far from bringing the reader's efforts to a standstill, is part of his profession. Traveller and journey coincide.

The third part deals with the collection of stones and the construction of the twelve memorials, once the Promised Land has been entered. The miracle of the Jordan flowing back was the work of God, and he guarantees the safety of the place. Besides this place of confidence, however, there is a place of diffidence and

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[137] *De exterminatione* I, 19: 'porro cum unum sit necessarium, tandem aliquando fige desiderium, dilige unum' (PL 196, col. 1087A). Compare above, n.40.

[138] *De exterminatione* II, 1 (PL 196, col. 1087AB).

[139] *De exterminatione* II, 3 (PL 196, col. 1089D). Compare Joshua 3, 15–16.

[140] *De exterminatione* II, 8: 'Debemus ergo, quandiu adhuc in deserto sumus […] arcam nostram ante nos praemittere, et subtiliter praevidere quo debeat virtutum familia per studium, vel per desiderium subsequendo tendere. [...] Sed ad illa quae ultra Jordanem sunt, quae sensum nostrum excedunt, melius nitimur desiderio quam studio, affectu quam intellectu, eo quod jubemur turbam non arcam praemittere, meliusque sit in hac parte multum desiderare quam multum discutere' (PL 196, cols 1094D–1095A).

[141] *De exterminatione* II, 11: 'Et, sicut nunquam sine ingenti desiderio ad eorum contemplationem sublevari meretur, ita sane in aeternorum concupiscentias sine vehementi studio perfecte non inflammatur' (PL 196, col. 1098D).

[142] *De exterminatione* II, 9: 'Satage ergo in perfectionis tuae consideratione et contemplatione, eo usque in ulteriora penetrare, ut veraciter te credas ejus saltem primordia, seu per affectum, seu per effectum necdum attigisse' (PL 196, col. 1096D).

desperation, where fortifications have to be built.[143] There are good and bad stones. With good stones, signifying stability and strength, one builds a memorial in a bad place, to serve in times of despair as a reminder of one's state of mind during divine visitation. The role of memory is thus involved. But memory works the other way as well. The bad stones, symbolizing obstinacy, hardness and other negative qualities, are there to prevent any presumption in times of confidence.[144] As ever, Richard manipulates his images. The stones have been brought together by the twelve tribes of the people of Israel, the progeny of Jacob's sons, and each stone, in a new cluster of meanings, represents the special virtue with which these sons had been associated in the *Benjamin minor*:[145] fear, compunction, hope, charity, patience, and also speculation, discretion and contemplation. In times of despair one can remember the monument that one has been building in cogitating these virtues.

In a last manoeuvre Richard accumulates meanings by adding to each stone another biblical text and person: for example the stone of charity is connected with Peter, on which Christ builds his Church;[146] the stone of speculation is the stone on which Jacob had his dream.[147] The last stone is to be found at the Lord's tomb.[148] In this stone—the stone of contemplation—perfect tranquillity reigns. Again, as in the first book, a supreme level of concentration has been reached. Not only does the head lie on this stone, as is the case on the stone of Jacob, but this stone touches the whole body. Recalling that part of the *Benjamin minor* depicting the birth of Benjamin, this stone of perfect contemplation absorbs the senses, the imagination, and the lower faculties of the soul.[149] All is in a state of passivity and of utter peace.

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[143] *De exterminatione* III, 1: 'Tutus stationis locus et magnae securitatis, praesumptio de adjutorio divinae pietatis. Sed est alius locus loco huic valde dissimilis, subreptio videlicet diffidentiae et desperationis' (PL 196, col. 1103B).

[144] *De exterminatione* III, 3–4 (PL 196, cols 1104C–1105D).

[145] *De exterminatione* III, 6 (PL 196, cols 1106C–1107C).

[146] *De exterminatione* III, 10: 'Quartam itidem apud Petrum petram invenio […] Ubi, obsecro, invenitur charitatis integritas si eam apud Petrum non reperias' (PL 196, col. 1108BC).

[147] *De exterminatione* III, 16: 'Decimus lapis dictus est assiduitas speculationis. […] Reclinato itaque capite, Jacob in hoc lapide, clausisque oculis concupiscentiae (quos apertos legimus in primo parente), dum in hoc reclinatorio alta quiete sopitur, dum exteriorum omnium libenter obliviscitur, animus ejus ad interiora evigilat' (PL 196, cols 1111B–1112C).

[148] *De exterminatione* III, 18: 'Lapidem duodecimum, omniumque novissimum invenire possumus, ut arbitror, apud Dominicum sepulcrum' (PL 196, col. 1113B).

[149] *De exterminatione* III, 18: 'Ad summam itaque pacem componitur, qui in hoc lapide sepellitur, quia intra contemplationis tranquillitatem totus colligitur atque concluditur. Neque enim lapis iste sicut ille Jacob soli capiti supponitur […] sed toto corpori coaptatur atque applicatur. Hic itaque lapis totum corpus ambit […] eo quod pax illa, quae omnem sensum exsuperat, omnem sensum humanum funditus absorbeat, et in divinum quemdam habitum

This peace comes about, however, only after a moment of violence: the single substance of soul and spirit—this most indivisible essence—is split, despite its indivisibility, by the living and powerful Word of God, which is sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4.12).[150] Soul and spirit are separated. The former (man's animal nature) stays behind in peace and tranquillity, just as, in *Benjamin minor*, the disciples fell to earth on the Mount of Transfiguration. Only man, in his spiritual aspect, is elevated to the *excessus mentis* and transcends himself, and is united with God: 'The spirit is separated from the soul, to be united to God. Indeed who is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit' (I Corinthians 6. 17).[151] But again, as in *Benjamin minor* and in *Benjamin maior*, this is not the last step in the process. The tranquillity does not last three days (the three days that Christ was in his tomb), nor even half an hour (the half-hour of apocalyptic silence after the opening of the seventh seal in Revelation 8. 1).[152] After the *excessus* the spirit returns to itself—it resurges to a new life where the contemplative death cannot last. One cannot escape a feeling of anti-climax, as everything starts again, though with a difference. What the passible and corruptible mind had left behind, it takes up as if it were now impassible, incorruptible: it rejoices in tribulation and injustice, it tolerates contumely patiently.[153]

The construction of this monument, then, is the first thing to do in the Promised Land. It serves as a lasting reminder. Whoever forgets about these benefits, will

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puriorem animae partem felici transfiguratione convertat. […] nihil sensualitas, nihil agit imaginatio, et omnis inferior vis animae proprio interim induitur officio' (PL 196, cols 1113D–1114A).

[150] *De exterminatione* III, 18: 'Oportet ergo antequam introire liceat in illud intimae quietis secretum et summae tranquillitatis arcanum; oportet, inquam, ut fiat illa valde gravis et vere mirabilis, non dissolutio animae et corporis, sed alia hac multo mirabilior multoque gloriosior, illa denique, cujus ista est typus, divisio videlicet animae et spiritus. Hanc autem operari in nobis solet sicut testatur Apostolus, vivus ille Dei sermo et efficax, et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti, et pertingens usque ad divisionem animae et spiritus' (PL 196, col. 1114B).

[151] *De exterminatione* III, 18: 'Spiritus ab anima scinditur ut Domino uniatur. Qui enim adhaeret Domino, unus spiritus est' (PL 196, col. 1115A).

[152] *De exterminatione* III, 18: 'quamvis peregrinationis suae protelationem usque in diem tertium non extendat, etiamsi silentii moram usque ad dimidiam horam non producat' (PL 196, col. 1115BC).

[153] *De exterminatione* III, 18: 'Redit ergo tandem, et revertitur ad se spiritus ille qui longe excesserat supra se, et quod passibile et corruptibile posuerat, quasi impassibile et incorruptibile ad prioris status comparationem resumit, et in novitatem vitae resurgit. Quid tibi videtur ad illatam injuriam hilarescere, ad objectam contumeliam non erubescere, de tribulatione gaudere?' (PL 196, col. 1116A). A similar return after the *excessus mentis* can be seen in *De quatuor gradibus*, where the return, the last of four degrees of love, is associated not only with impassibility but, more explicitly than in *De exterminatione*, with spiritual fecundity and the wish to serve the brothers. See I. van ´t Spijker, 'Exegesis and Emotions'.

never obtain greater goods—so Richard ends this work,[154] indicating yet again that there is no end to the reader's travelling between digression and concentration.

The Human Condition: De statu interioris hominis

The mechanisms behind the process of digression and concentration and its background in the human constitution, were hinted at in *Benjamin maior*, where Richard wrote about the affects. The same mechanisms are one of the main elements in *De statu interioris hominis*,[155] where Richard presents a much gloomier picture than where he praised the human faculties as one of the subjects of contemplation. In this work he paints the hazardous condition of man as it is after the Fall. The treatise is a comment on the Isaiah text (1. 5-6): 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.'[156] One could read *De statu interioris hominis* as Richard's anthropology, as well as his doctrine of sin. It certainly contains these elements, but not in the form of a systematic presentation of man's psychology. *De statu* is an account of the state of affairs of man, of his inner life, bringing about once again the self-knowledge which will constitute the reader: 'Parallel to the condition of the outer man, the state of the inner man is described so that you, by way of exterior maladies, of which you know, learn about the interior ones, and what you should fear about them.'[157]

In the prologue Richard announces his method, indicating (yet again) that this is a work of leisure:

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[154] *De exterminatione* III, 18: 'Sine hoc enim lapidum cumulo, Dominica illa aeternae hereditatis promissio nunquam fortiter acquiritur, nunquam secure possidetur. Qui enim beneficiorum divinitus perceptorum obliviscitur, ad majora obtinenda promoveri non meretur' (PL 196, col. 1116BC).

[155] 'Richard de Saint-Victor. De statu interioris hominis', ed by J. Ribaillier, *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age*, 42 (1967), 7–128 (pp. 61–128). I will quote from this edition (hereafter *De statu*). According to Châtillon, 'Richard de Saint-Victor'(col. 613) the work was probably written during Richard's period as sub-prior (1159–1162).

[156] On this text see also *Liber exceptionum*, Pars Secunda, Liber X, sermo XI (Châtillon, pp. 398–400); and *Adnotationes mysticae in psalmos*, on Ps. 118 (PL 196, col. 352C).

[157] *De statu* 1: 'Attende et cognosce magnitudinem morbi, ut anxius concupiscas, attentius requiras, ardentius diligas remedia medici. Vide ergo quomodo secundum qualitatem hominis exterioris describitur tibi status hominis interioris, ut per mala exteriora, que qualia vel quanta sint non ignoras, discas quid de interioribus timere debeas' (Ribaillier, p. 65). Compare *De statu* 34: 'Iccirco sane exterioris hominis menbra audis nominari, ut ex notis discas que de interioris hominis statu non nosti' (Ribaillier, p. 101).

In the way of a walker, rather than a traveller, I have prolonged a short journey by long winding wanderings, surveying and admiring at the same time not the sweet places but the depth of the words and the heights of the sentences with curious leisure and leisured curiosity.[158]

Richard indeed takes his time, stops and has his reader stop at several points on the way, to discuss the human condition. In widening circles, Richard describes and elaborates on the three constituting elements: free will, deliberation, and the affects and appetites; signified respectively by the head, the heart, and the feet. All parts are affected by the Fall, leading to impotence, ignorance and concupiscence, which are the vices or shortcomings treated in the first part. When man consents to these vices, they become sin, the subject of the second part. The third part presents the remedies for man's predicament.

The head signifies free will, its freedom weakened but not lost through sin; in this man is the image of God. He may have lost the resemblance—his rationality—but he can never lose his freedom of will. In this consists his dignity. The heart is deliberation. As the heart vivifies the body, so *consilium* must animate our actions by a good intention, without which it is worthless. The feet represent carnal desire, whether concerning the affects or the appetite. After this downward-looking summary, Richard first elaborates on affects and appetite. It becomes clear that, for all the nobility of free will and the usefulness of deliberation, at bottom, the human condition is very precarious indeed. If, in *Benjamin maior*, the affects and their changeability were a matter of contemplation and wonder, in *De statu* they are at the root of a much bleaker view of the state of affairs. The *affectus* turn around in endlessly repeated circuits. Richard evokes the inconstancy and unsteadiness of affect and appetite in his language. The transitory character of affects, the repetitiveness of appetite, are reflected and enacted by repetitions in the text, which reflect the movements of the affects in the reader. These, moreover, are not only different but even contrary movements: loving something one moment, hating it the next:[159]

Similar to physical breath, the most changeable element that goes from hot to cold, the spiritual breath, the susceptible affect (*affectus passibilis*) is easily affected and changes by a light alteration in contrary passions. Who does not know how man, at the slightest breath of favour (*ad tenuem spirantis favoris aurem*) immediately tends wholly towards gratitude, and, if from the same mouth and at the same time bursts forth the wind of slander, immediately bends his affect towards the other side and turns it into hate and fury? It is really extraordinary, even pitiable that that noble

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[158] *De statu*, Prologus: 'Deambulantis itaque, non itinerantis more brevis itineris compendia multiplici evagatione protraxi, non locorum amena sed verborum profunda sententiarumque sublimia curiosa otiositate et otiosa curiositate perlustrans simul et admirans' (Ribaillier, p. 61).

[159] *De statu* 9: 'Recte sane lustrando universa in circuito pergere dicitur spiritus, quia, ut jam dictum est, per diversa rapitur et multiformiter variatur cordis affectus' (Ribaillier, p. 71).

creature, created to the image of God and placed before every other creature, at a mere word and a slight blowing, at the sound of the tongue and the strike of air, is as it were violently shaken out of the state of his rectitude and soon in a miraculous way dragged hither and thither, and tossed around like a whirlwind.[160]

This is a far cry from the affects as material to be transformed into virtues, although Richard will come to that later on in the work. The *appetitus* is, likewise, bound to go in vicious circles. It increases and decreases; it comes and goes. It does not behave as the winds, but as a river.[161] It follows the impulse of its course until it arrives at the accomplishment of its desire, and then returns to its origin. As water visibly runs on the surface of the earth and then runs back by subterranean courses, so all appetite is only fulfilled to raise itself again. Its inevitability is utterly tiresome:

> How, I ask, and how miserable it is, always to be moved in such a whirling and ever to be involved in such a restless agitation. How demanding are these joys of our desires, how hateful even, which are always generated from want and turn into disgust.[162]

Why this miserable state is so dominant becomes clearer when Richard returns to the subject of free will. Though free will may be the mark of man's dignity, it does not amount to much in this situation. What is at stake is the loss of its pre-lapsarian power of dominion in the realm of thought, feeling, appetite and senses. As long as 'the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh' (Galatians 5. 17) the king—free consent of the mind—will find conflict and rebellion in his kingdom, as thoughts contradict other thoughts, and affects resist other affects. Vices fight with each other, for instance avarice and gluttony, but also conquering one's pride

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[160] *De statu* 9: 'Sic spiritus ille spiritualis affectusque passibilis facile afficitur levique permutatione in contrarias passiones mutatur. Quis nescit quomodo homo, ad tenuem spirantis favoris auram, totus statim inclinatur ad gratiam et, si ex eodem ore et sub eodem tempore ventus detractionis eruperit, statim affectum in alteram partem flectit et in odium et in furorem vertit? Mirabile sane, immo et miserabile nobilem illam creaturam, ad imaginem Dei creatam et omni creature prelatam, ad modicum verbum tenuemque flatum, ad linguae sonitum aerisque ictum, a rectitudinis sue statu quasi violenter excuti, moxque mirum in modum huc illucque raptari et turbinis mori in vertiginem agitari' (Ribaillier, p. 72).

[161] *De statu* 10: 'Sic sane et appetitus carnis semper in motu, semper in transitu est, et nunquam in eodem statu permanere potest: accedit et recedit, crescit atque decrescit, et sic semper recedit atque decrescit ut iterum redeat atque crescat, et sic semper redit et crescit ut iterum recedat atque decrescat. […] Currit tamen semper, et transit, et semper in idipsum redit' (Ribaillier, p. 73).

[162] *De statu* 10: 'Quale, queso, et quam miserum est sub hac vertigine semper agi et hac tante inquietationis exagitatione semper involvi? Quam expetenda, immo quam detestanda sunt illa desideriorum nostrorum oblectamenta, que semper et ex defectu generantur et in fastidium vertuntur!' (Ribaillier, p. 74).

often results in pride about this conquest.[163] Even virtues, for instance justice and mercy, can be found to compete with each other.[164] All this inner division is the result of languor of the head, the defect of original virtue, the loss of former power. For all its freedom, human will is weak and cannot be wholly cured and without outside help of grace it cannot raise itself to the good.

One factor underlying the inconstant state of human beings is the intermediate position of man, in between the future worlds of good and evil, as was shown in *De exterminatione*. 'Nothing here on earth is totally good, nothing totally bad', as Richard wrote also in the *Benjamin minor*.[165] In the *Benjamin minor* that was the reason why we must imagine eternal good and bad. In *De statu* Richard again emphasizes man's ambivalent position:

> As long as we live on earth, as long as we are on earth, we sustain these vicissitudes of time. In heaven there is day without night; in hell night without day, on earth there is neither night without day nor day without night. […] On earth there is no pain without hope, no joy without fear. […] On earth laughter is always mixed with tears.[166]

Ambiguity is reflected in *De statu* also when it comes to our powers of knowledge and deliberation. One must be able not only to judge about good and evil, which is done by *deliberatio*; one must also distinguish, by *discretio*, between different degrees of good, or the greater or lesser usefulness of things in different circumstances, for different people.[167] These powers of deliberation and discretion are due to divine grace, and this grace is not always present: the divine ray of internal aspiration is sometimes infused, at other times withdrawn.[168] As free will has become weak, as we have never sufficient grace to do well, so we have never sufficient grace to distinguish the truth: 'See, how much darkness of ambiguity the

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[163] *De statu* 15–18 (Ribaillier, pp. 79–83).

[164] *De statu* 19 (Ribaillier, pp. 83–84).

[165] See above, notes 34 and 132: *Beniamin minor* 16 (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p.132, ll. 9–16, ll. 17–19; PL 196, col. 11C); *De exterminatione* I, 9 (PL 196, col. 1079A).

[166] *De statu* 27: 'Quamdiu in terra vivimus, quamdiu in terra sumus, has temporum vicissitudines necessario sustinemus. In celo dies sine nocte; in inferno nox sine die; in terra nec nox sine die, nec dies sine nocte. […] in terra nec dolor sine spe, nec gaudium sine timore. […] in medio *tempus ridendi* et *tempus flendi*. Risus enim *dolore miscebitur, et extrema gaudii luctus occupat* (Proverbs 14. 13) (Ribaillier, p. 93).

[167] *De statu* 24–26 (Ribaillier, pp. 89–92).

[168] *De statu* 31: 'Divinus itaque ille interne aspirationis radius quandoque infunditur, quandoque subtrahitur. […] Quid igitur mirum, si *omne cor meret*, quod divinam lucem semper presentem habere non valet, sine qua nichil clare perspicit, nichil recte discernit?' (Ribaillier, p. 98).

human heart suffers and has to suffer as long as we live here, so that fittingly it can be said: the whole heart is mourning.'[169]

The considerations about discretion and deliberation are thus related to divine absence and presence. Presence or absence of divine grace, however, is not synonymous with moments of mystical union or its lack. They relate to certain much more practical issues: how to decide about what is more or less advisable and useful. It appears that divine grace, its presence and absence, is associated with human judgement and drawn from the realm of transcendence into the level of the human condition. The presence or absence of divine grace not only reflects daily life, with its inconstancy and the impossibility of a lasting peace, but also the domain of human 'artistic' management of these limitations. This is shown also in the succeeding exegesis of the story of the Lord of the vineyard (Matthew 20. 1-16), which Richard weaves into his exposition to explain the way in which man is brought back to integrity, an integrity which will not be wholly achieved until the 'end of the day'. The vineyard is human conscience. The Lord, that is God, goes out to find labourers to cultivate the vineyard, when he makes his will known through internal aspiration.[170] Again Richard has his reader circle around different aspects and the sequential steps of the process. The succeeding hours are the steps of progress, and, according to the advance of perfection and the increase of virtues, they indicate the growth of divine knowledge. The labourers are the thoughts and the affections, who must sweat in the cleansing of conscience, first in the investigation of truth, then in the exercise of virtue. Thinking must 'penetrate the hidden'; affections must 'cut off useless habits'.[171] In typical repetitive enumerations the hours and the workers are explained. The first daylight, for example, is the illumination of truth; increasing warmth means the acceptance of good; the midday heat is the fervour of love; the mitigation of heat points to abhorrence of vanity; then when heat and daylight withdraw, this means the curbing of cupidity. Although, in the end, the wages are equal for all, the *cogitationes* have been the first, not because of any priority of understanding over love, but because, in this life, we 'can attain full perfection more by thinking than we can impress our affect with it or fulfil it in works'.[172] Richard ends his overview of man's predicament on a note about the all-

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[169] *De statu* 31: 'Ecce quantam ambigui caliginem cor humanum sustinet et quantam, quamdiu hic vivitur, sustinere habet, ut merito dicatur quia *omne cor meret*' (Ribaillier, p. 99).

[170] *De statu* 35 (Ribaillier, pp. 103–105).

[171] *De statu* 35: 'Ad illos [sc.cogitationes] pertinet in altum fodere et occulta penetrare, ad istos [sc. affectiones] spectat sarmentorum superflua amputare et morum inutilia resecare' (Ribaillier, p. 104).

[172] *De statu* 37: 'Quamdiu autem in hac vita sumus, quamdiu in vinea laboramus, plus utique est quod de perfectionis plenitudine attingere possumus cogitatione quam quod interim possumus plene affectioni imprimere vel opere explere. Quis enim totum hic possit quod se debere vel decere cognoscit?' (Ribaillier, p. 106–107).

pervasive human feebleness, indicated by the first part of Isaiah 1. 6: from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it.

In the next parts, Richard will explain that wounds, bruises and sores signify how, by consent, the vices of impotence, ignorance and concupiscence become actual sins; and how the binding, curing and ointments of the text refer to the divine remedies of commands, threats and promises. However, even without actual sinning, or the tendency to neglect divine remedies, the 'inveterate evils' of the incapacity to do good, the desire of evil, and ignorance about what is good and evil, which occupy the main part of *De statu*, leave no doubt about man's precarious condition.

Presumption and Despair: De eruditione interioris hominis

That this precariousness is, ultimately, just part of the monastic performance becomes clear in Richard's *De eruditione interioris hominis*, a work that can be seen as an equivalent to Bernard of Clairvaux's *De gradibus humilitatis*, with its merging of monastic *ascensio* and *descensio*. What has become apparent so far is the non-linear character of monastic life, whether as a process of knowledge or in its affective aspects. There is no stability, and the reader's life, informed by man's weakness, alternates between the different grades and sorts of contemplation, between moments of contemplation and its loss, between confidence and diffidence, concentration and digression. All these elements return in *De eruditione interioris hominis*, in what can be seen as a repeated climbing and descending of the succeeding rungs of the ladder that is monastic life. On a ladder from arrogance to despair one can never stay in the same state or on the same rung of the ladder.[173]

While providing a focus for the aimless thoughts and affects of the reader, Richard shows how these thoughts and affects are the raw material from which to sculpt one's inner self into the desired work of art. *De eruditione* is an exegesis, in three parts, of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar about the image of gold, silver, brass, iron and clay (Daniel 2), of his vision of the tree that was destroyed (Daniel 4), and of Daniel's vision about four beasts emerging from the sea (Daniel 7). In Richard's explanation, the visions illustrate the round-about which is monastic life: 'The prophet seems to point out by this mystical vision how it happens that men of virtue by certain grades of deterioration fall down to the bottom, and by visiting grace sometimes rise again to the former or even to a stronger state of mind.'[174] While in *De exterminatione* the alternation was presented as one of confidence and

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[173] *De eruditione hominis interioris* (hereafter *De eruditione*), PL 196, 1229D–1366A. I quote part and chapter and colon. Here I, 24 (PL 196, col. 1271D).

[174] *De eruditione* I, 1: 'videtur propheta hoc mystica visione designare quomodo viros virtutum contingat paulatim defluere, et quibusdam detrimentorum gradibus in ima corruere, et per visitantem gratiam quandoque ad pristinam, vel potius potiorem animi statum resurgere' (PL 196, col. 1230D).

diffidence, the road from presumption to despair is a running theme in all three parts of *De eruditione*, presumption and despair being just two sides of the same coin: misjudgement of both human possibilities and of divine power. In Richard's view this 'falling short' is an inevitably recurring element of the reader's profession.[175]

In the first part, Nebuchadnezzar's vision, its loss and retrieval signify how the grace of contemplation is given, only to be withdrawn and then repaired beyond its first appearance. Nebuchadnezzar's dreaming, his call for the wise men of the country, their failure to tell and interpret the dream, followed by Daniel's arrival and his telling and interpretation of the dream—all these scenes illustrate the process of human knowledge and its limitations, and the importance of divine revelation. The different layers of the statue signify various aspects of the reader's life and the descent into vice. Falling is inevitable, and, in the end, useful as well, leading to humility.[176] Richard repeats several times that the kingdom, of which Nebuchadnezzar is king, is inside us.[177] The inner man is thus like a stage upon which the story of the dreams is to be enacted: 'Don't you think that the human mind bears a royal person inside, when it begins to preside its affections and its passions?'[178] Being king means being able to control thoughts and passions, to restrain them from wandering around. At the same time, Nebuchadnezzar is a prophet, who, by his dream, foretold the failures in his kingdom. Similarly the readers will fulfil this prophetic character when they constantly search their inner movements and behaviour. From a decreasing of good desires one can foretell a decreasing of good works.[179] Being attentive, warned by one's experience, one can read the signs. The sages whom Nebuchadnezzar calls upon to explain his dream are our investigations, upon which we have to concentrate;[180] Daniel is devotion; his

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[175] I have borrowed the expression 'falling short' from Peter Cramer, *Baptism and Change in the Early Middle Ages, c. 200–c.1150* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), who discusses 'falling short' in the last chapter (chapter 6) of his book as a pervasive aspect in twelfth-century culture. On Bernard of Clairvaux's professionalizing of despair, see Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux*, pp. 85–121.

[176] *De eruditione* I, 1: 'Sic saepe mens humana post multiplicem ruinam, divina inspiratione compuncta ad justitiam redit, et ex ipso suo casu erudita et humiliata, quanto eruditior quantoque humilior, tanto et fortior resurgit' (PL 196, col. 1231B).

[177] For example *De eruditione* I, 6 (PL 196, col.1240A); I, 8 (PL 196, col. 1243C (for D)); I, 18 (PL 196, col. 1261A); I, 21 (PL 196, col. 1265C); I, 31 (PL 196, col. 1283B).

[178] *De eruditione* I, 1: 'Nonne tibi videtur animus humanus in se regiam quodammodo personam gerere, cum coeperit affectibus et passionibus (tum ex liberi arbitrii jure, tum ex gratiae collatione) fortiter praesidere, et cum auctoritate imperare, et illud quod intra nos est regnum coelorum viriliter vindicare?' (PL 196, col. 1232B).

[179] *De eruditione* I, 1: 'Saepe autem defectus bonorum desideriorum praesignat defectum bonorum operum' (PL 196, col. 1232D).

[180] *De eruditione* I, 2 (PL 196, col. 1234AB).

companions are circumspection, discretion and deliberation.[181] In this treatise
contemplation is very much part of day-to-day monastic life. Nebuchadnezzar has
his dream in his second year, meaning that contemplation comes to a spiritual person
after he has come to control his concupiscence and disciplined his thought.[182]
Contemplation refers to grace revealing divine judgements. When this grace comes
to an immature mind, it often happens that it attributes this grace of revelation to
itself. The horrors of contemplation revealing divine justice turn out to be as
powerful as its delights, when the presumptuous beginner realizes how far it is
beyond his power to respond to divine grace.[183] To prevent him from falling prey to
despair, the grace of contemplation is withdrawn for the moment. Divine grace,
although it may seem to be an outside force, is inextricably connected throughout
with the process going on in the reader, and the fear gripping him has its place in
monastic affective economy, as Richard had shown in the *Benjamin minor*. The
same applies to presumption. The danger of presumption, of attributing to oneself
what is only to be attributed to grace, is ever there; even when it is least expected.
When the sages had greeted their king, saying: 'O king, live forever', this 'living
forever' refers to always having a good intention.[184] How deceptive things can be:
one may speak wonderfully about the need of divine grace, the need not to trust
one's own abilities, not to attribute to oneself what may be attributed only to divine
grace. At the same time, one can be so delighted with one's subtlety in discussing
this subject, that it serves vanity more than truth.[185] This possibly deceptive character
of humility, and the impossibility of ever reaching the goal, is like a bottomless pit
absorbing all monastic effort, almost grounding the reader's life. One does not know

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[181] *De eruditione* I, 8 (PL 196, col. 1243B); I, 12 (PL 196, col. 1248B).

[182] *De eruditione* I, 2: 'Recte autem anno secundo rex iste somnium vidit, quia spiritualis
quisque post edomitam concupiscentiam cognitionumque disciplinam, tandem aliquando
contemplationis studio vacare praevalet atque assuescit'(PL 196, col. 1233C).

[183] *De eruditione* I, 2: 'Saepe autem fit ut, dum humanus animus ad divinorum judiciorum
subtilitatem, seu etiam districtionem contemplandam ducitur, ex ea ipsa divinae districtionis
consideratione quam praecipit, subito timore medullitus concutiatur. Dum enim mens rudis, et
coelestibus disciplinis minus erudita, de propria industria, magis quam de gratia divina, adhuc
omnia praesumit, facile in hunc timorem ex divinae severitatis contemplatione, aequitatisque
illius consideratione cadit. Praesumptuosa namque mens, dum miranda subtilitate conspicit,
quam sit supra humanam virtutem divinis beneficiis respondere […] saepe in immensam
formidinem (imo pene usque in desperationem) solet seipsam praecipitare' (PL 196, cols
1233D–1234A).

[184] *De eruditione* I, 3: 'Quae, inquam, est illius principalis in anima (humanae videlicet
mentis) vita, nisi intentio bona?' (PL 196, col. 1235D).

[185] *De eruditione* I, 3: 'Saepe cum de divinae gratiae commendatione, subtiliter aliquid
apud proximos loquimur de nostrae locutionis subtilitate apud nosmetipsos gloriamur' (PL
196, col. 1236B). Compare *Beniamin minor* 46 (Châtillon and Duchet-Suchaut, p. 226, ll. 25–
29), about people taking pride in their subtle preaching against pride.

whether one sees any movement at all. This deceptive character calls for the capacity to distinguish scrupulously between one's inner movements. Daniel, who can indeed tell and interpret the dream where the sages could not, signifies devotion. Devotion counts for much more than human investigation, which can only fail. Daniel, who knows the dream by revelation only, does not trust his own capacities. He first consults his friends, that is circumspection, discretion and deliberation. We all know by experience, Richard says, that without these devotion is helpless.[186] In this way, and consistently, Richard again emphasizes the need to constantly watch one's inner life, and again appeals to experience. In Daniel's interpretation of the dream, Nebuchadnezzar's sleep is taken as a *mentis excessum*, and the things then seen.[187] As elsewhere, the importance of memory is emphasized, when Richard says: 'When our Daniel tells the dream, it means nothing more than that the devout mind, after having lost the contemplative grace, calls back to memory how it was, and tries to receive it again by applying itself to compunction.'[188] Often, this grace of contemplation is given to beginners and then withdrawn, so that they may know by experience what they should seek with avidity.

To further illustrate the coming and going of contemplation, Richard refers to the story about the two apostles on their way to Emmaus after Christ's resurrection (Luke 24. 13-32), where the Lord presents himself only to disappear again. The two apostles saw Jesus without recognizing him while they were on their way—that is, when contemplation is seen in a *mentis excessum*, *in transitu*. Then the Lord withdrew his presence—that is the grace of contemplation—to teach them by experience with how much avidity he wants them to seek and retain him. This is contemplation in a nutshell and, once again, the link with exegesis or interpretation and its limits becomes clear:

> They try to make him stay and enter the house when by many prayers the lost grace is repaired so that the mind draws the vision which it had from the outside into itself and retains in its memory what it had seen during its *excessus* when it returns to itself […]. We present the Lord with the food he likes, when we praise and thank him for the recuperation and accumulation of his grace […]. In between hymns of exultation and confession our inner mind (*sinus mentis*) is widened, our sense is sharpened, and our intelligence is illuminated to penetrate the mysteries and to search the hidden things of divinity […]. The bread, without doubt, is broken by the Lord before our eyes, when

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[186] *De eruditione* I, 12: 'Per tres istos, Danielis socios individuos, et comites inseparabiles, circumspectionem, discretionem, deliberationem intelligimus, sine quibus verae devotionis officium nullo modo posse expleri quotidiano experimento probamus' (PL 196, col. 1248B).

[187] *De eruditione* I, 19 (PL 196, col. 1261C).

[188] *De eruditione* I, 19: 'Nihil aliud est Danielem nostrum ista dicere, amissunque (*sic*) somnium retractare, regemque docere, quam devotam mentem saepe post amissam contemplationis gratiam, qualis in ea aliquando fuerit, ad memoriam revocare, et per multam compunctionis instantiam iterum eam reprare (*sic*), firmiusque tandem atque perfectius possidere' (PL 196, col. 1261C).

the depth of mysteries is opened up by mystical interpretation, and is known while he reveals it himself. From this breaking of bread and this revelation of mysteries it happens that the Lord is known in his own appearance and Truth itself, while the veil of symbols has been taken away, is perceived in its simplicity, and the presence of the Lord is understood from the infusion of this very grace. But the Lord, the Wisdom of God, vanishes out of their sight when from the contemplation and admiration of divine Wisdom he makes known to the contemplating and admiring mind how much his incomprehensibility exceeds all human intelligence. […] Thus, the more subtly the human mind has been illuminated to contemplate the Wisdom of God, the more strongly it is thrown back into itself, by the immensity of this light, which means that Wisdom vanishes out of the sight of the onlooker, and withdraws herself while showing herself.[189]

If the reader seems to be part of a sinister play, he also appears, at least to some extent, to be the director of this play, applying himself to prayer, interpretation and memory. This becomes even more obvious when Richard points to the correspondence between this story and the story about Nebuchadnezzar. The Lord, who presents himself as a stranger, points to Nebuchadnezzar receiving his vision under a mystical veil. That the Lord pretends to go away corresponds with the fact that the vision is disappearing for a moment from memory. That he is pulled inside refers to the vision being sought ardently, and by Daniel's concern it is then perceived and retained much more deeply and perfectly. That he is known as

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[189] *De eruditione* I, 20: 'Tunc autem Dominus longius se ire fingit, nec tamen penitus recedit, quando contemplationis gratiam quam misericorditer impendere consuevit, non minus utiliter ad tempus subtrahit, ut melius per experientiam doceat cum quanta aviditate requiri, vel retineri debeat. Manere autem, et ad eos intrare compellitur, quando multa precum instantia amissa gratia reparatur, ut visionem exterius oblatam introrsum trahat, et per excessum visa, animus ad se ipsum reversus memoriter retineat, et ad contemplationis gratiam de caetero familiarius possideat. Cibos quales Dominus amat, et delectari solet, apponimus, quando eum pro recuperatione vel accumulatione gratiae in voce exsultationis et confessionis laudamus […]. Inter hos saepe exsultationis et confessionis nostrae hymnos sinus mentis dilatatur, sensus acuitur, et ad mystica penetranda, et usque ad Divinitatis arcana saepe rimanda, intelligentia illuminatur […]. Panis coram nobis procul dubio a Domino frangitur, quando mysteriorum profunditas mystica interpretatione aperitur, ipsoque revelante cognoscitur. Ex hac panis fractione, mysteriorumque revelatione agitur, ut Dominus in propria specie recognoscatur, et ipsa Veritas (utpote figurarum velamine amoto) in sua simplicitate perspiciatur, Dominique praesentia ex gratiae ipsius infusione perpendatur. Dominus autem (qui et Dei sapientia) ab oculis intuentium evanescit, quando ex contemplatione et admiratione divinae sapientiae contemplantis et admirantis animo innotescit, quantum ejus incomprehensibilitas omnem humanam intelligentiam excedit […]. Humanus siquidem animus, quanto subtilius ad Dei sapientiam contemplandam illuminatur, tanto validius in semetipsum luminis illius immensitate reverberatur, quod est ab intuentis oculis evanescere, et seipsam quasi ostendendo subducere' (PL 196, col. 1263D–1264C).

himself, means that the vision, clouded till then, is finally manifested by prophetic interpretation.[190]

Compared with Hugh's dream-like evocation of the same scene in his *In Hierarchiam coelestem*, Richard's exegesis of the two men of Emmaus is very explicit, nearly to the point of forcing the reader outside the story, and almost leaving him to execute the process rather than being part of the process. Still, Richard's distinctions are aspects of the circle of monastic life. By inserting this gospel episode in his presentation of the common, day to day practice of contemplation, Richards not only follows a long tradition referring to divine presence and absence,[191] but also shows the interconnectedness of the different layers of monastic life: the elevated but in the end elusive epistemological level; the exegetical level; the level of memory; all of these inform monastic experience.

When it comes to the exegesis of Daniel's interpretation of the dream, Richard first summarizes: in accordance with the proposed form of the vision, everyone should decrease in self-esteem, whoever wants to build a heavenly kingdom in his inner self, and slowly descend to true humility.[192] In the presentation of Daniel's interpretation of the dream about the image, with its head of gold and its feet of clay, Richard presents a double reading. Both readings make it clear that falling short is inevitable—being aware of it, again, is only part of the religious profession. The head, or gold, can mean charity, from which one descends to silver, that is truth, but truth without charity. Copper points to simulation, making a good impression, but out of vanity; iron symbolizes cruelty: once one's brothers have seen through the simulated devotion, one becomes cruel and harsh in reproaching them. Clay points to the fragility of impatience in one's own hardships. In another reading, though, the head signifies the most negative aspect and the whole image signifies a ladder from arrogance to impatience, and the interconnections between all the stages. On the other hand, the collapse of the image, brought about by a stone which begins at the feet, is contrition: a state which is more easily attained from a state of impatience, and less so from a state of arrogance.[193]

The awareness of the inevitability of falling short is re-enacted again in the second part, where the exegesis circles around the vision Nebuchadnezzar had while

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[190] *De eruditione* I, 20 (PL 196, col. 1264D).

[191] Compare Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica* 74, 3, in *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. by J. Leclercq, C. H. Talbot, H. M. Rochais (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957–1977, 8 vols.), II, 239–246 (p. 241).

[192] *De eruditione* I, 21: 'unumquemque oportere puto, juxta propositam ostensae visionis formam, apud semetipsum a propria aestimatione decrescere, et a sui confidentia magis magisque deficere, praesumptionemque temperare, si regnum coelorum intus apud semetipsum optat aedificari' (PL 196, col. 1265C).

[193] *De eruditione* I, 23–24 (PL 196, cols 1269C–1273B); I, 26–28 (PL 196, cols 1274B–1278C).

in his house, his palace. The house is human conscience; the palace means a well-ordered conscience.[194] Daniel (devotion) teaching the king (free will) points to the mind that after having enjoyed contemplation without fully understanding it turns to introspection. The mind, after the free flight of contemplation, by meditation and circumspection, reads in its conduct and comes to a better understanding.[195] Contemplation again refers to something ordinary rather than to isolated moments of illumination. Sleep, vision, means drawing the great divine things (*magnalia dei*) as they are known from scripture into one's contemplation and admiration. The interpretation of the vision then refers to explaining these things.[196] Apart from the content of the vision, the character of knowledge gained through vision, its interpretation is discussed as signifying human ways of knowing and its limitations, before the interpretation of the content of the dream is presented. The vision was about a tree under which animals live, in whose branches birds have their nests. The animals refer to carnal *affectus*, and the birds to thoughts. Both must be controlled, but 'we are becoming more capable of discretion by learning from our failures'. Richard's text guides the reader in this learning. Behind the elaborate exegesis of Nebuchadnezzar's vision is the reading principle of fulfilling in oneself what is read: 'We fulfil in ourselves what we read about this tree, when we enclose carnal affects into a strict discipline; and have our thoughts occupied by circumspection of our way of life.'[197]

For a third time Richard directs the reader on the stage of his inner life when, in the last part, he interprets Daniel's vision. In this vision Daniel sees four animals emerging from the sea; a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a monstrous beast with ten horns. Growing among these horns is another which has eyes and a mouth, speaking tremendous things. These beasts symbolize a deteriorating sequence, going from the wish to stand out, *singularitas*, to cruelty*, crudelitas*, from presumption and envy to

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[194] *De eruditione* II, 1 (PL 196, col. 1299A).

[195] *De eruditione* II, 3: 'Designatus ergo rex apud Danielem quasi somniorum suorum interpretationem quaerit, et invenit, quando animus, quae inter liberos contemplationis suae volatus prospexit, postmodum meditando, et circumspiciendo in moribus legit, et altius intelligit' (PL 196, col. 1302A).

[196] *De eruditione* II, 5: 'Nonne ad somnii visionem pertinet stupenda illa, quae in Scripturis legimus divinorum judiciorum magnalia in considerationem adducere, et eorum admirationi diutius et diligentius inhaerere? Nonne ad somnii interpretationem pertinet mysticam eorum intelligentiam quaerere, et per expositionem explanare posse?' (PL 196, col. 1303BC).

[197] *De eruditione* II, 18: 'Sed est hoc ipsum quod de hac arbore dicitur in nobis ipsis implemus, si carnales affectiones sub rigore disciplinae restringimus, et cogitationes nostras in morum circumspectione occupamus, et per spiritales meditationes omnes sensus nostros in bonis desideriis nutrimus […] Non solum autem ex bonis quae agimus, verum etiam ex malis quae sustinemus ad discretionem erudimur, et ex ipsis tentationibus prudentiores efficimur (PL 196, col. 1317A–1317C).

simulation and impudence, ending in despair.[198] This third part can be read as a recapitulation of the first two parts, again presenting the way from arrogance to despair. It starts with *insolentia*, which includes the wish to go against what is usual, presuming above one's powers. One may be overzealous, wanting to out-do the others by fasting and discipline, neither sparing one's body, nor being horrified at the death of the soul by the contempt of obedience.[199] The person described despises others, and becomes swollen with pride.[200] Then it turns out that his rigour is too much; he cannot persevere in it. If he does not take this as a warning sign of his own inability, of human frailty, and as an experience of the inevitability of human sin,[201] he will become envious of others, vilifying their deeds, and he will feign a greater devotion than he actually has—that is, he has reached the stage of fraudulence and simulation.[202] When the others come to see through his pretence, he becomes completely obdurate and insolent.[203] The obduracy is symbolized by the horns. When he loses any hope of recovery, he becomes desperate.[204] At first, this despair manifests itself in the strange, newest horn, which speaks tremendous things: the sinner blames God, not himself. He says (with a quotation of Romans 9. 16) that he

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[198] *De eruditione* III, 4 (PL 196, cols 1351D–1352C).

[199] *De eruditione* III, 5: 'Nonne leoninae videtur audaciae et ad faciendum sibi nomen, ambulare in magnis et mirabilibus supra se, omnia ultra vires praesumere, spreto consilio doctorum, contempto praecepto majorum, jejunia, vigilias et ejusmodi observantias ultra modum extendere, et nec saluti corporis parcere, nec animae mortem in debitae obedientiae contemptu horrere?' (PL 196, col. 1353A).

[200] *De eruditione* III, 6: 'Ecce qui de semetipsis ultra modum praesumunt, quomodo gradatim amittunt, unde intumescunt, caeterosque contemnunt' (PL 196, col. 1353D).

[201] *De eruditione* III, 7: 'vel tunc veraciter cor hominis accipit quando per multam experientiam errorem suum intelligit, et tam suum defectum quam aliorum profectum plenius agnoscit. Sed quod homini divinitus conceditur ad bonum suum, ipse homo saepe abutitur ad malum suum. Et cognitis suis, vel aliorum meritis disparibus, unde deberet compungi ad poenitentiam, inde excrescit ad majorem invidiam' (PL 196, col. 1355C / D).

[202] *De eruditione* III, 10: 'Unde fit saepe ut se ad callida argumenta convertat, dum summo cum studio et sollicitudine quaeritat, quomodo vel suam gloriam dilatare, vel aliorum obnubilare queat. Incipit itaque ex tunc sanctitatem simulare, et per hypocrisim paulatim se ad omnem fraudulentiam tradere' (PL 196, col. 1358C).

[203] *De eruditione* III, 14: 'nam, cum ulterius in suis pravitatibus posse latere diffidunt, cum unicum illud gloriationis suae gaudium sine ulla spe recuperandi amittunt, statim ad apertam impudentiam erumpunt' (PL 196, col. 1361A).

[204] *De eruditione* III, 19: 'Sed, depravata anima saepe, cum in profundum malorum venerit post omnia mala, spem etiam resipiscendi amittit, et in desperationem cadit'(PL 196, col. 1364A).

cannot help sinning, because it is not in the power of the one who wills, or runs, but of God who takes pity on the sinner.[205]

While, as will be shown in the next chapter, the *non est volentis* in William of Saint-Thierry is part of his doctrine of predestination which functions as a demarcation between the monastic and the outside world, Richard uses it as part of the exegetical structuring of the course of intra-monastic life. 'To excuse yourself, you will accuse God, to justify yourself, you will blaspheme God', Richard tells his reader.[206] It is only when the Ancient of Days sits on the throne and takes away the power of the beasts, that the kingdom of sin is annihilated. Where sin increases, grace abounds. No human *malitia* can overcome divine *misericordia*.[207] After the descent from bad to worse, the ascent begins and the mind starts to be reformed to its integrity: just as, in Richard's other treatises, the death of contemplation cannot last, in this tripartite *De gradibus* the precarious, circular character of monastic life defies the death of despair.

In these three exegetical narratives Richard presents a content for the *experientia* and the *homo interior*. Humility is the goal. Recognition of one's own failure and dependence on divine revelation and divine grace are the *sine qua non* of contemplation. Meanwhile, it is one's experience of this failure which is emphasized. Circumspection, discretion, and deliberation are there to decide on the character of thoughts, affections, intentions, and deeds. Thoughts and affects must be under control. Yet they cannot be controlled out of existence. Affections such as presumption, pride, insolence, despair, are not denied, but they are shown in their interconnectedness, each one having its place in an irrevocable itinerary from which one always turns back. Even when one reaches the bottom rung of despair the only possibility is the way up afterwards. *Affectus* and *cogitationes*, turned into virtues or vices, are the material within which the wished for inner person, its form and image are to be carved out. The massive reiteration of the need for self-abasement results in something like the solid slab of a Giacometti-sculpture. By retracing Richard's exegesis in one's own inner self, the reader is in fact constructing this very self,

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[205] *De eruditione* III, 19: 'Anima de sua semel salute desperata, et a gratia divina penitus destituta, cum sentit se inveteratae consuetudini non posse resistere, et a sua se pravitate non posse cohibere, solet saepe seipsam excusabilem ostendere, et culpam suam in Creatorem refundere. […] Oportet, inquiunt, esse, quomodo praedestinatum est, quis Dei voluntati, quis ejus ordinationi resistere potest? […] Non est utique volentis neque currentis sed miserentis Dei' (PL 196, col. 1364CD).

[206] *De eruditione* III, 19: 'Ut te excuses, Deum accusas; ut te justifices, Deum blasphemas?' (PL 196, col. 1364D).

[207] *De eruditione* III, 19: 'Audivimus quomodo mens de malo semper in pejus corruens, in profundum tandem malorum deducitur. Audiamus quomodo, vel unde eadem ipsa quandoque, post multa et ultima mala, ad rectitudinis integritatem reformatur. […] Quoniam ubi abundavit iniquitas, superabundavit et gratia. Et hoc Scripturae loco facile advertere est quod nulla nostra malitia divinam misericordiam vincere potest' (PL 196, cols 1365A–1366A).

presumption and despair converging with desire and the ever elusive divine grace into the tiny figure of the monk.

Conclusion

Richard is a master of the gradation process, showing the steps between different stages. This does not only mean that one goes from one step to the next step. More than the other authors considered so far, Richard is aware, and makes his reader aware, of the ambivalence of every moment of monastic existence. Descending and ascending are possible at any moment. Differing from the militant Peter Damian, who was fighting off vice, Richard incorporates vice and temptations in the monastic itinerary in a much milder way. When it comes to idle thoughts, for instance, Peter Damian had treated these as enemies from the outside, against which the inner man must guard himself. In Richard, this idleness is rather the space of divagations as a backdrop to the necessary concentration of thought. Without this, concentration would not be possible. It is the thinking reader who concentrates his thoughts rather than keeping them out with the help of a *cingulum*, as in Peter Damian. By his exegesis, Richard offers his readers a script which they can rewrite for themselves by reading it. Following and imitating the explications of the text, the reader will construct his inner life. Reading and experience become increasingly reflective of each other. At the same time, the biblical and exegetical text functions as a screen between reader and his inner life, which prevents him from being absorbed by the immediacy of his *experientia*. Richard's melancholy urgency is different from the ardent passivity which, as I will show in the next chapter, defines the process in William of Saint-Thierry.

Exegesis as the way *par excellence* of forming the person and of giving expression to this forming-process has its apogee in Richard.[208] He incorporates thoughts and feelings, free will and intentions in his exegesis, as the material from which, by a process of concentration, to compose the inner man. However, that which from the point of concentration is considered superfluous is not just a remnant of the secular world which has been left behind (something to be resisted, as in Peter Damian). It has been recognized as part of the intra-monastic world, the material from which to mould one's person. Even so, there will always remain something which is too elusive to be incorporated, a residue of formlessness. This formlessness is not part of the opposition between, on the one hand, the outside world (and what

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[208] More so, in my opinion, than in Bernard of Clairvaux, who may be more sculptural in his expression than Richard, but by his authorial presence leaves less room for his reader to compose his own work of art. Bernard's reader has to surrender to Bernard's text, whereas Richard's reader—at the price of a certain dullness—is left to re-compose the text he is reading.

from inside the monastery is seen as its amorphousness),[209] and, on the other hand, the fixed shape of monastic life. It exists within the reader who tries to compose himself. It resists Richard's lists of distinctions and accounts for the vicissitudes and ambivalence, which in Richard are so essentially part of monastic existence, reflecting the ultimate ambivalence: divine presence, brought about in the contemplative process, is implicated in its absence and its loss, 'withdrawing itself while showing itself'.[210] As far as man composes his self with the help of exegesis, the ultimate failure of exegesis to achieve lasting comprehension corresponds with a failure of man's composition. However, Richard makes loss and absence, failure and incomprehension, into the contours of the self.

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[209] Compare Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux*, on Bernard and the monastery and monastic life as a fixed shape compared with the formlessness of the surrounding nature.

[210] *De eruditione* I, 20 (PL 196, col. 1264C): 'et seipsam quasi ostendendo subducere'; compare *Benjamin Maior* IV, 17: 'Sed si absentissimo nihil est praesentius, si praesentissimo nihil est absentius' (Aris, p. 110, l. 36 – p. 111, l. 1; PL 196, col. 157D). McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism*, pp. 420–421, cites these lines at the end of his Epilogue.

William of Saint-Thierry:
Experience and the Religious Subject

I n this final chapter we go back a little in time, and return to the world of the monasteries and the ideals of the desert which formed the background of the first chapter. But the monastic landscape in which William of Saint-Thierry lived and worked is not at all the same as that of Peter Damian.

William of Saint-Thierry, once eclipsed by his friend and tutor, Bernard of Clairvaux, is now generally regarded as a major theologian in his own right, and as a major representative of the monastic mystical tradition.[1] His theology is of much more originality and depth than once assumed. Little is known about his early life. He was born in the diocese of Liège, between 1075 and 1080. It is generally thought that after a primary education in Liège he went to school in Reims. He gave up his intellectual pursuits to become a monk in Saint-Nicaise in Reims in the second decade of the twelfth century, and may have met Bernard of Clairvaux as early as 1118. In 1121 he became abbot of Saint-Thierry in Reims. Already in 1124 he wanted to become a Cistercian, but Bernard of Clairvaux convinced him that he

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[1] McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism*, p. 273. For an introduction to and overview of William's work, see the whole Chapter 6 on William in this book. See also Ruh, *Geschichte der abendländischen Mystik,* I, 276–319. For William's biography and a recent bibliography see Paul Verdeyen in the introduction to his edition of the *Expositio svper epistolam ad Romanos*, CCCM 86 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989). For a summary of the re-evaluation of William's theology and the discussion about his sources (Greek, Plotinian vs Western, Augustinian) see also Michaela Pfeifer, 'Wilhelms von Saint-Thierry Goldener Brief und seine Bedeutung', I, *Analecta Cisterciensia*, 50 (1994), 3–250; II: *Analecta Cisterciensia*, 51 (1995), 3–109 (I, 47–52). See also Bernard McGinn, 'Pseudo-Dionysius and the Early Cistercians', in *One Yet Two: Monastic Tradition, East and West*, ed. by M. Basil Pennington, Orthodox–Cistercian Symposium, Oxford University, 26 August – 1 September 1973 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1976), pp. 200–241 (pp. 224–228).

should stay in Saint-Thierry. It was only in 1135 that he finally attained the long awaited quiet, when he entered the new Cistercian monastery of Signy in the Ardennes. He died there in 1148.

We see from this short outline that William is an example of the transition from school to monastery, a transition made by many people in his time.[2] He has left many works, three of which were, for a long time, attributed to Bernard.[3] His *De natura et dignitate amoris*, as well as *De contemplando deo*, were written at an early stage, about 1120; in the *Epistola ad fratres de Monte-Dei*, or *Golden Letter*, written at the end of his life, he summarizes his view of monastic life, and guides the reader into that life. The incorporation of these works in the *oeuvre* of Bernard guaranteed their circulation among a broad public in the later Middle Ages. Their attribution to Bernard may have helped their survival, but it did not benefit William's reputation. In the modern re-evaluation of his position in twelfth-century monasticism, his other works have been studied as well. His treatise *De natura corporis et animae* (*On the nature of the body and the soul*) can be seen in the context of the new wave of interest of the West in the medical knowledge of antiquity. His *Meditativae Orationes* contain material that may originate in the third decade of the twelfth century, but in the form with which we are familiar, the work may have been edited by William during his time in Signy. As he himself reports in his Life of Bernard, William started to think about writing a commentary on the Song of Songs during a stay with Bernard, while both were ill. After having composed a *Brevis Commentatio*, and some florilegia about the Song of Songs distilled from the works of Ambrose and the commentary by Gregory the Great, William wrote a commentary, the *Expositio super Cantica Canticorum*, in which, in the tropological fashion of the twelfth century, Bridegroom and Bride refer to Christ and the soul. Between 1142 and 1144 he wrote two treatises on faith, the *Speculum fidei* and the *Enigma fidei*. As he himself recalled, he had to interrupt the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* to attend to what he regarded as the heresy of Abelard. He wrote his *Expositio svper Epistolam Romanorum* partly to make clear his views in the matter. He dealt directly with what he saw as a serious menace to Christian faith in his *Disputatio adversus Petrum Abaelardum*. The debate with Abelard resonates in other works too, and William's anti-dialectic attitude is an important element in his reputation. However, one should bear in mind that William takes for granted a

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[2] See Lester K. Little, 'Intellectual Training and Attitudes towards Reform (1075–1150)', in: *Pierre Abélard, Pierre le Vénérable: Les courants philosophiques, littéraires et artistiques au milieu du XIIe siècle*, ed. by René Louis, Jean Jolivet and Jean Châtillon. Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, DXLVI, abbaye de Cluny 1972 (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1975), pp. 235–249.

[3] For a dating of William's works see Verdeyen's 'Introduction' in *Expositio svper epistolam ad Romanos*, pp. xxiii–xxxi. For the development of William's ideas, especially his concept of *experientia*, see Yves-Anselme Baudelet, *L'Expérience spirituelle selon Guillaume de Saint-Thierry* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1985).

monastic public, even what he sees as its avant-garde, and most of the works mentioned here were written for this public. As we shall see the anti-dialectic arguments often serve an intra-monastic purpose as well.

The strong emphasis on affective piety and experience for which William is known was also upheld by many of his contemporaries. This affective piety marks a departure from the devotion of Peter Damian and its militant rejection of the world. William, and Cistercian monks in general, are also often contrasted with a more intellectual, speculative approach, of which the Victorines are considered the protagonists. It is disputable whether this dichotomy of affective versus speculative devotion is adequate to describe the differences between authors in the twelfth century. What later became a sharp dichotomy resulted from the diverse ways in which the twelfth century effectuated the *mise en sène* of the divine.[4]

Jean Leclercq sees William as marked by conflicts, and suggests that the fear and anxiety which William ascribes to Bernard in the Life he wrote about his friend, actually applied to himself as well.[5] Temperamental qualities may be relevant, but to

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[4] See Alain Boureau, *L'Événément sans fin. Récit et christianisme au Moyen Age* (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1993), pp. 46–47, who distinguishes the diverse methods of the twelfth-century's 'promotion du visible': on the side of clerics and canons (Chartres, Saint-Victor), 'la raison théologique part à la conquête du monde; la matière et l'homme participent à la divinité'. On the side of monasticism there is the 'évocation imaginative de Dieu'. On this dichotomy see also R. Javelet, art. 'Image et ressemblance III: aux 11e et 12e siècles', in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, VII, 2 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1971), cols 1431–1434, where Javelet distinguishes between a noetic spirituality of which the Victorines are an example, and a voluntaristic one, represented by the Cistercians. The view of diametrically opposed ways seems to originate in the later Middle Ages, mainly as a critique, on the side of the more affect-oriented devotion, of the so-called speculative devotion (and this view was often projected back on earlier times, when there was variety rather than opposition).

[5] Jean Leclercq, 'Towards a Spiritual Portrait of William of Saint-Thierry', in *William, Abbot of St.-Thierry: A Colloquium on the Abbey of St.-Thierry*, trans. by Jerry Carfantan (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1987), pp. 204–224 (p. 210). Compare Pfeifer, 'Wilhelms von Saint-Thierry Goldener Brief' I, p. 116, who sees a more optimistic note in William, compared with Bernard of Clairvaux: William took away the weight of the Augustinian doctrine of original sin, had a sense of humor, and (p. 44) a positive view of nature. As will become clear in this chapter, in my reading of his works, William of Saint-Thierry shows tensions and torment rather than optimism. In this, my reading also differs from that of Renevey, *Language, Self and Love*, esp. Chapters 2 and 3. I agree with Renevey as to the performative nature of William's work (p. 59), but when he attributes to William a psychological reading of the Song of Songs, more adequate, in its understanding of the soul, than that of Bernard of Clairvaux (pp. 30, 32), this betrays a risk of anachronism. Renevey sees William's work, within the twelfth century, as 'the best account of the making of a self through the language and the tradition of the commentary on the Song of Songs'. He analyses how William's hermeneutic practice is closely related to the discovery of the self (p. 41), through the language of the desire for the vision of God.

what extent they account for different forms of piety is a difficult question to answer. The importance of psychological factors is also difficult to weigh. There is no access to William's psychology except via his work, which, against the background of its monastic context, is hardly transparant in this respect.

Whatever the origin in personal character, the characterization of William's piety as an affective, personal piety, is not surprising. Reading his works, the impression is, indeed, one of increasing subjectivity. Verdeyen points out how William introduces a subjective, personal perspective, when, in one of the *Meditativae Orationes*, he exclaims: 'God is with me, why don't I feel that I am with him'.[6] A similar perspective can be found in Augustine, and it is significant that such a perspective re-emerges, even though William was not the first author who reflects this Augustinian subjectivity: in his *Meditations* Anselm shows a comparable viewpoint.[7] The question remains: what is meant by apparently familiar notions such as 'subjective' or 'personal'? *Experientia, affectus, affectio, sensus, sentire*, those are the words that William uses abundantly, but none of the separate elements in William's piety are new: we have encountered *affectus*, *experientia*, and other concepts in the previous chapters. As in Anselm's *Meditations*, what is regarded as William's personal stance develops within the well-known tradition of prayers and meditations. In what follows I shall investigate how these familiar elements function in William's works and how, by giving weight to certain aspects, he incorporates in his discourse dimensions of the *homo interior* that were, if not absent, much less prominent in the authors I have considered so far.

Epistemology and the Three States

To gain access to William's view of the *homo interior* and his development a starting point may be found in some aspects of William's view of human knowledge. William is mainly interested in the knowledge which the soul can attain of God, and which can only be acquired in a long process. He explains this knowledge by drawing an analogy with the way in which the senses acquire their information. Connected to this process is William's idea of the three *status* of man, either as stages in the development of an individual, or as various aspects of the

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[6] *Meditatio* III, 4: 'Scio certe uerissime, sentio saluberrime, te esse mecum; scio et sentio, adoro, et gratias ago. Sed cum tu sis mecum, cur et ego non sum tecum?', quoted from *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry. Oraisons Méditatives*, ed. by J. Hourlier, SC 324 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1985), p. 66, ll. 4–6. Compare Paul Verdeyen, *La Théologie Mystique de Guillaume de Saint Thierry* (Paris: FAC-éditions, 1990), p. 24.

[7] On Anselmus see Southern, *A Portrait in a Landscape*. For Augustine, see *Confessiones* X, XXVII, 38. Compare William's *Speculum fidei* 63: 'Omnibus enim interioribus nostris interior Deus', quoted from *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry. Le miroir de la foi*, ed. by Jean Déchanet, SC 301 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1982), p. 130, l. 1.

religious life, or referring to different categories of people: the *homo animalis*, the beginner; the *homo rationalis*, who has made progress and left worldly things behind; and the *homo spiritualis*, who has reached a state of perfection.[8]

More so than in Hugh of Saint-Victor or Richard of Saint-Victor, William's epistemology focuses on the role of love. *Amor* is presented as the force that carries the soul to its destination through its natural weight:[9] every creature, whether spiritual or corporeal, has such a weight, by which it is carried to its own place. Thus fire strives upwards, water downwards. After the Fall, man has not lost this power, but he has to learn how to cleanse it, how to progress, and how to consolidate it. In William's famous résumé of his view of knowledge, love is understanding: *amor ipse intellectus est*.[10] This refers to the knowledge of God, a *visio* and *cognitio Dei*,[11] but the notion also pervades William's view on a more general level. As ultimate knowledge it is only the end of a long development. To explain this development William often compares the spiritual process with the knowledge of the senses, in particular with the process of seeing. Analogous to the process of gaining knowledge via the senses, spiritual knowledge is possible by way of the *sensus* of the soul—love, *amor*: 'Just as the body has its five senses, by which it is joined, through the intermediary of life, to the soul; the soul has its senses, by which it is joined to God, through the intermediary of charity.'[12] The bodily senses, in this view, can be compared with different affections. Five sorts of affection are possible: the love of family is like the sense of touch; the broader social love is compared with taste; general love for all men is like smell; and spiritual love—loving one's

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[8] William had found this distinction in Origen. See the notes by Jean Déchanet in *Epistola Domni Willelmi ad Fratres de Monte Dei*, ch. 267, ed. by Jean Déchanet, *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry. Lettre au frères du Mont-Dieu*, SC 223 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1985), p. 392 (hereafter *Epistola*).

[9] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 1: 'Est quippe amor vis anime naturali quodam pondere ferens eam in locum vel finem suum', quoted from *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry. Deux Traités de l'Amour de Dieu. De la Contemplation de Dieu. De la nature et de la dignité de l'amour*, ed. by M.-M. Davy, Bibliothèque des Textes Philosophiques (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1953), p. 70, l. 5–6; PL 184, I, 1, col. 379C. For the same ideas in Augustine, influenced by Stoic philosophy (for example *De Civitate Dei* XI, 28; *Confessiones* XIII, IX, 10) see Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self*, pp. 83– 84. See also Pierre Courcelle, *Les Confessions de Saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraires. Antécédents et Postérité* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1963), pp. 285–286.

[10] Reflecting 1 John 4. 7, but also Gregory the Great's 'amor ipse notitia est', *Homiliae in Evangelia* 27, 4 (PL 76, col. 1207A). See McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism*, p. 58.

[11] *Epistola* 267 (Déchanet, p. 356, l. 1).

[12] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 18: 'Sicut enim corpus suos quinque habet sensus, quibus anime conjungitur, vita mediante; sic et anima suos quinque sensus habet, quibus Deo conjungitur, mediante caritate' (Davy, p. 94, ll. 21–24; PL 184, VI, 15, col. 390BC).

enemy—is compared with hearing.[13] Just as sight is the principle sense in the body, so divine love has the first place among all affections.[14] Charity is the natural sight of the soul to see God. It has two eyes: *amor* and *ratio*. Both are necessary, but in the end, whoever progresses in this process, does so only by his experience, and cannot communicate his knowledge to someone who does not have this experience.[15]

Another aspect of William's ideas of sense-perception is important in his comparisons with spiritual knowledge: just as the bodily senses are somehow changed into what is sensed, so the sense of the soul becomes what it senses, and thus unity with God is achieved.[16] As sight becomes in a way what is seen, so the same with the *sensus animae*—*amor*—which, by loving God, becomes similar to God.[17] The realization of unity is explained once more in terms of a comparison with

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[13] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 19–22 (Davy, p. 96–98; PL 184, III, 7 – IV, 9, cols 391A–392B).

[14] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 23: 'Quinto, visui comparatur amor divinus. Visus enim principalis est sensus: sicut inter omnes affectiones principatum obtinet amor divinus' (Davy, p. 98, ll. 19–21; PL 184, VII, 20, col. 392A).

[15] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 25: 'Cum tamen, ut dixi, invicem se adjuvant, et ratio docet amorem, et amor illuminat rationem; et ratio cedit in affectum amoris, et amor acquiescit cohiberi terminis rationis; magnum quid possunt. Sed quid est quod possunt? Sicut proficere proficiens in hoc, et hoc discere non potuit, nisi experiendo, sic nec communicare potuit inexperto' (Davy, p. 102, ll. 3–8; PL 184, VIII, 21, col. 393C).

[16] See for example *Meditatio* III, 9: 'Omnis sensus corporeus, ut sensus sit et sentiat, oportet ut quadam sensibili affectione aliquomodo mutetur in id quod sentit […]. Nisi enim, rem sensam sensu rationi renuntiante, anima sentientis quadam sui transformatione mutetur in rem uel rei qualitatem quae sentitur, nec sensus est, nec sentire potest. Ideoque si sentit amore, qui sensus suus est, Deum bonum, et amat quia bonum, non hoc potest nisi, bono ipsi affectu communicans, et ipsa bona efficiatur' (Hourlier, p. 70, ll. 3–12).

[17] See for example *Speculum fidei* 96: 'Amat enim, et amor suus sensus suus est quo sentit eum quem sentit, et quodammodo transformatur in id quod sentit; non enim eum sentit, nisi in eum transformetur, hoc est nisi ipse in ipsa, et ipsa in ipso sit' (Déchanet, p. 166, ll. 10–13). Compare David N. Bell, *The Image and Likeness: The Augustinian Spirituality of William of Saint-Thierry*, Cistercian Studies Series, 78 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1984), p.161, note 19, for more quotations of *amor* as *sensus*. See also *Expositio super Canticum Canticorum* XIX, 90: 'Vbi homini illi Dei non est aliud de Deo sentire, quam per bonae experientiae affectum similitudinem eius contrahere secundum qualitatem et sensae speciei et sentientis amoris. Sicut enim in rebus per corpus sensibilibus, sensus est sentiendo per quamdam mentis phantasiam in ipsam mentem contracta quaedam sensae rei similitudo, secundum qualitatem sensus sentientis et rei sensibilis, ut, uerbi gratia, si ad sensum pertinet uidendi quod sentitur, uideri omnino non possit a uidente, si non prius uisibile eius per similitudinem cuiusdam phantasmatis formetur in anima uidentis, per quam transformetur sentiens in id quod sentitur; sic et multo magis operatur uisio Dei in sensu amoris quo uidetur

sense-knowledge: even in sense-perception some form of love is at play in focussing the attention of the sense on something, and this is even more so in divine love.[18]

This view of knowledge can be found in most of William's works. It is connected, especially in the *Epistola* and in the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, with his notion of the three stages, referred to above. In the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, the actual commentary is preceded by a summary of exactly these three stages: three states are to be distinguished among those who pray, or three sorts of prayer; *animalis, rationalis* and *spiritualis*: 'Each sort forms and presents itself with his Lord God in his own way, because God appears to the person who prays according to how the person is.'[19] In the *Epistola* William further elaborates these stages and delineates an itinerary for his monastic reader that leads to the possibility of the vision of God and unity with God at the end.[20] An outline of this itinerary will introduce many of the notions that are important to William.

More than in his other works, in this Letter William pays attention to the practical, ascetic details in the life of the beginning monk. Although the *Epistola*

Deus', quoted from *Expositio super Canticum Canticorum*, ed. by Paul Verdeyen, CCCM 87 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), p. 69, ll. 51–63 (hereafter *Expositio*).

[18] *Expositio* XIX, 90: 'Siquidem et in illo corporearum sensu rerum, nisi cum sensu pariter etiam amor operetur, sensus ipse uix ad aliquem peruenit effectum, quia refugit continuo sentiens, si non aliquo amoris appetitu adhaereat rei quae sentitur. In uisione uero Dei, ubi solus amor operatur, nullo alio sensu cooperante, incomparabiliter dignius ac subtilius omni sensuum imaginatione, idem agit puritas amoris ac diuinus affectus, suauius afficiens, fortiusque attrahens, et dulcius continens sentientem, totumque et mente et actu in Deum transfundens fideliter amantem, et confortans et conformans, et uiuificans ad fruendum' (Verdeyen, p. 69, l. 63 – p. 70, l. 73).

[19] *Expositio* III, 11: 'Tres ergo status esse orantium uel orationum manifestum est: animalem, rationalem, spiritualem. Vnusquisque secundum modum suum format sibi uel proponit dominum Deum suum, quia qualis est ipse qui orat, talis ei apparet Deus quem orat' (Verdeyen, p. 24, ll. 9–12). On William's *Commentary* and on the tradition of the exegesis of the Canticle see Friedrich Ohly, *Hohelied-Studien: Grundzüge einer Geschichte der Hoheliedauslegung des Abendlandes bis um 1200* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1958); Ann W. Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell Universtity Press, 1990); E. Ann Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990); Renevey, *Language, Self and Love*.

[20] See Pfeifer, 'Wilhelms von Saint-Thierry Goldener Brief'. Pfeifer's detailed study deals with the *Epistola* as part of monastic theology which defies later urges to systematization. By using a philological–literary approach, positioning the work in the epistolary tradition, Pfeifer is able to see the *Epistola* not as a veiled expression of William's desire for the Carthusian life, but as an address to a wider public than the Carthusians, containing a warning to his fellow Cistercians to keep to the original ideals. Its main importance, however, is its 'mystagogical' character, with its various perspectives helping the reader to 'practise' new and difficult thoughts and achieve the concomitant spiritual development.

could easily be read as a straightforward program, leading the reader from one stage to the next, at certain points William explicitly declares that these stages, with their succeeding forms of knowledge—*sensus*, *scientia* and *sapientia*—can occur at different moments in the life of the monk, and can also apply to different sorts of people.[21] William further suggests that they can also refer to different aspects of monastic life: the *status animalis*, for instance, relates to the outer man.[22]

The first stage is that of the *homo animalis*, the beginner, who has not yet learned to give up the life of the senses, and who cannot think without corporeal images. He must be led by obedience to authority and not yet by *ratio* or *affectus*.[23] In the *homo animalis* the soul goes out, as it were, and delights in corporeal pleasures, and then, on entering into itself again, it takes the images of these sensual pleasures with it (46).[24] Turned away from God, animality becomes folly. Only by being converted to God will this state achieve *simplicitas*—that is, a will directed towards God (49). Without this conversion, outwardly the *homo animalis* in this stage can hardly be distinguished from worldly people, as both make use of the fruits of creation. At this stage of the description it is only just clear that this is about a monastic community. But some distinction is soon re-established, as William continues; while some use these goods of creation for the sake of curiosity, others only use them out of necessity (59). In their actions both may seem alike, but God distinguishes their intentions (61). However, even the one who has already conquered his *concupiscentia* (in the Augustinian sense of a wrongly directed desire) will suffer the images of what he has done, seen and heard as long as a desire of the real good, or a major delight has not got hold of his mind (62). Although he already strives for freedom, he cannot yet shed off the images connected to his affections, and the noxious or absorbing or otiose thoughts that originate from these affections (63). Thus (and if any doubt was left, the reader is unmistakably in a community of monks again) at the hour of psalmsinging and prayer, images and fantastic thoughts turn around in the heart of the servant of God, which completely corrupt the fruits of his prayer (64). *Spiritus* and *ratio* claim the will and the intention, but the depravity of the *animalis* besets affect and intellect, and the mind stays without any fruit (65).

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[21] *Epistola* 140: 'Sciendum vero est, quia cum de carnali vel de animali sensu, vel de rationali scientia, vel de spirituali sapientia disserimus, et unum hominem describimus, in quo, secundum diversos profectus, et profectuum proventus, et intentionis affectus, haec omnia diversis temporibus possibile est inveniri; et tria hominum genera, singula secundum statuum horum proprietates, in professione religionis, in cellis militantia' (Déchanet, p. 254, ll. 1–8).

[22] *Epistola* 197: 'Quia […] status animalis vigilat circa corpus, et hominem exteriorem componendum, et aptandum studio virtutis, sic rationalis circa animum agere debet, vel faciendum, si non est, vel excolendum et ordinandum si est' (Déchanet, p. 306, ll. 1–6).

[23] *Epistola* 43 (Déchanet, p. 178, ll. 1–5).

[24] In the following, the numbers in ( ) in the text refer to the numbers of the paragraphs in the edition by Déchanet.

That is why the one who is new in religion and solitude, and does not yet have reason to lead him or affect to draw him, or discernment to moderate him, should let himelf be made and formed, as the pot by the potter (68).[25] He should regard his body as a sick man trusted to his care (72). He should be careful with regard to temptations (79), especially the temptation of idleness, *otium*. He should undertake work so as to concentrate himself (87). In the end, what was custom will become pleasure (92). He should apply himself to spiritual exercises as well: searching his conscience, reading and prayer. It is appropriate with regard to the *homo animalis* to stimulate his inner life by first offering him the outer life of Christ (171) as the material for his meditation and prayer, in which, 'as much as he sees or understands him to whom he offers his prayer, he [God] is present in his affect, and then to him love itself is understanding', *amor ipse intellectus est* (173). It is best that the image of our Lord's humanity is offered to him, so that the weak mind which can only think of corporeal things has something by which to be affected (174).

The rational and spiritual states which follow the *status animalis* are easily merging into each other, when *ratio* ascends to *amor*.[26] Self-knowledge plays an important role in the *status rationalis*. The first thing that has to be done in this state is to see what the soul is. William distinguishes between *animus* and *anima* (197). *Anima* is capable of reason (*rationis capax*), but only when she begins to be of perfect reason, she becomes *animus* (198). The will, which man had not lost after the Fall, but which had lost its freedom, is liberated, when it turns into *caritas* and when the love of God is diffused in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (200-201). *Ratio*, in this context, is a sight of the mind, by which it sees truth, without the intermediary of the senses. In this stage, what really matters happens inside, in the mind, where man is renewed (213). The process as described for this stage is much less concrete than the instructions in the part which dealt with the beginner: it is about being patient in much suffering, in work, in waking, in one's cell. The soul discusses itself alone with God (215), in silence and solitude, distinguishing between vices and virtues, seeing what are the mechanisms behind them. For instance, a neglected will leads to mental levity and that produces instability, inconstance, vain cheerfulness and equally vain sadness (223). Virtue, on the contrary, is a daughter of reason, and more so of grace. It is a voluntary assent to the good (227).

These considerations of vice and virtue lead to a more general treatment of *voluntas* as a transition to the treatment of the *homo spiritualis*. The will is 'a natural appetite of the rational soul', which can direct itself either towards its inner life, and towards God, or towards the body and outer things (234):

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[25] Compare the program as proposed in *De natura et dignitate amoris* 9–12 (Davy, pp. 80–84; PL 184, III, 7 – IV, 9, cols 384B–386B).

[26] *Epistola* 196: 'Cumque ratio proficiendo in amorem sursum ascendit, et amanti, et desideranti gratia condescendit, unum saepe fiunt, quae duos illos status efficiunt, quae sunt ratio et amor, et quae ex eis efficiuntur, scilicet sapientia et scientia' (Déchanet, p. 304, ll. 1–5).

When it tends upwards, like a fire to its natural place, that is, when it is associated to truth and is moved towards higher things, it is love, *amor*; when it is nurtured by grace, to progress, it is *dilectio*; when it comes to apprehend, to keep, to enjoy, it is *caritas*, unity of spirit, God, for God is love.[27]

Still, when man achieves this end, he just begins, for in this life there is no perfection (235). Even in this stage, when the will bends down towards what is the domain of the flesh, it is *concupiscentia* (236). This is partly inevitable and natural, but when it exceeds what is necessary it becomes a vice of nature (237). The best custodian of a good will is obedience to another, as often another is a better judge of what is going on than one is oneself (239).

In the last part, the Augustinian mental trinity of memory, understanding and will is implied to describe the thought process. William shows how good and bad thoughts originate in the mind:

The will compels memory to bring forward the material; it compels understanding to give form to what is brought forward, applying understanding to memory, so that from there it is formed, and applying the sharpness of the thinker to understanding, so that from there thinking takes place.[…]

When one thinks about God, however, and the will becomes love, the Holy Spirit communicates himself. Immediately, memory becomes wisdom, when God's goodness has a sweet taste for her, and the thought that rises from it is there to be formed into an affect, and is applied to understanding; the understanding of the thinker becomes the contemplation of the lover, and, forming this into some experiences of spiritual or divine sweetness, from there it affects the keenest sight of the thinker, and this sight becomes the delight of joy.[28]

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[27] *Epistola* 235: 'Haec, cum sursum tendit, sicut ignis ad locum suum: hoc est, cum sociatur veritati, et movetur ad altiora, amor est; cum, ut promoveatur, lactatur a gratia, dilectio est; cum apprehendit, cum tenet, cum fruitur, caritas est, unitas spiritus est, Deus est, Deus enim caritas est' (Déchanet, p. 332, ll. 1–5).

[28] *Epistola* 242: 'Voluntas cogit memoriam, ut proferat materiam; cogit intellectum ad formandum quod profertur, adhibens intellectum memoriae, ut inde formetur, intellectui vero aciem cogitantis, ut inde cogitetur' (Déchanet, p. 336, ll. 1–6); *Epistola* 249: 'Cum vero de eis quae de Deo, vel ad Deum sunt cogitatur, et voluntas eo proficit ut amor fiat, continuo per viam amoris infundit se Spiritus sanctus, spiritus vitae, et omnia vivificat, adjuvans seu in oratione, seu in meditatione, seu in tractatu infirmitatem cogitantis. Et continuo memoria efficitur sapientia, cum suaviter ei sapiunt bona Domini, et quod ex eis cogitatum est formandum in affectum, adhibet intellectui; intellectus vero cogitantis efficitur contemplatio amantis, et formans illud in quasdam spiritualis vel divinae suavitatis experientias, afficit ex eis aciem cogitantis, illa vero efficitur gaudium fruentis' (Déchanet, p. 342, ll. 1–12). On *acies mentis* as the point 'where time intersects with eternity' (in Augustine) see Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 99.

By now, the reader is in the state of the *spiritualis*. The way of thinking just described is not in the power of the monk, but depends on the gift of the Holy Spirit.[29] The monk can only prepare his heart, extricating his will from other affections, his understanding from all other concerns, his memory from vain thoughts (251). The man who wants to love God, or already loves him, has to search his conscience and his will continuously (254-256). This is how God should be loved. William repeats what he said earlier: a great will towards God is *amor*; *dilectio* indicates adhesion or conjunction, *caritas* is enjoyment. Unity is there when the will cannot will anything other than that which God wills (257). Willing what God wills, is being similar; not being able to will anything but what God wills, is being—not God—but what God is, for whom willing and being are one. (258) This is where the *visio Dei* is sometimes possible, even if only for a moment: 'For whom has thus been elected and is loved by God, sometimes some light of God's face is shown, a light enclosed in a hand, as in passing' (268) after which one is returned, to prepare one's sight again. 'The pious affect thus intends towards this Good […] and this is the only goal of the struggle of the solitary monk. It is perfection.'[30]

The Form of the Monk

The man who reaches this goal and this perfection has realized the transformation that was announced earlier in the *Epistola*: it is the perfection of the *homo spiritualis* to be transformed 'into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord' (AV II Corintians 3. 18).[31] The notion of *forma* is present in William as it is in Peter Damian and Hugh and Richard of Saint-Victor. The original, and ultimate, form is the *imago Dei*: 'You had formed me to your image and likeness.'[32] The way to achieve this goal is often presented as a process of informing, transforming, or conforming. Man has to prepare his inner substance by discipline, to become fit to be impressed and formed.[33] In his *Meditations*, William prays: 'Un-

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[29] *Epistola* 251: 'Sed modus hic cogitandi de Deo, non est in arbitrio cogitantis, sed in gratia donantis; scilicet cum Spiritus sanctus, qui ubi vult spirat, quando vult et quomodo vult, et quibus vult, in hoc aspirat' (Déchanet, p. 344, ll. 1–4).

[30] *Epistola* 276: 'Et hoc est destinatum solitarii certaminis […] Et ipsa est perfectio' (Déchanet, p. 364, ll. 1–3).

[31] *Epistola* 45: 'perfectio vero, transformari in eamdem imaginem a claritate in claritatem, sicut a Domini spiritu' (Déchanet, p. 180, ll. 9–11).

[32] *Meditatio* IV, 9: 'formaueras me ad imaginem et similitudinem tuam' (Hourlier, p. 84, ll. 4–5).

[33] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 11: 'Cum vero interioris hominis substantia longo discipline usu emollita plene poterit imprimi et informari in eorum formam, tunc fructum pacatissimum operabitur salutis; tunc in re, non specie horum omnium et similium percipiet utilitatem' (Davy, p. 82, l. 32 – p. 84, l. 1; PL 184, IV, 9, col. 385CD).

form me from the form of the world, to which I have conformed; conform me to your citizens, that I will not appear without form among them.'[34] The necessity of achieving form is clear, but it is not so much the reader who forms himself, who builds an inner ark for instance, but the reader who offers himself as material to be formed: 'Simplicity, having in itself a kind of first fruits of God's creatures (James 1. 18), that is a simple and good will, offers this as the formless material of the future good man, in the beginning of his conversion, to its author to be formed.' The reader recognizes that he cannot be formed by himself.[35]

Throughout, there is a tension between the passive and the active. This tension is very clearly articulated in *De natura corporis et animae*. William has explained that every soul exists in three inseparable parts, which he calls here *memoria*, *consilium* and *voluntas*. The figure of the Trinity flows through the whole of reality, and when the soul observes this with its intelligence, it delights, less in the beauty of its own form, than in the beauty of the formative Form. Intending towards this Form the soul becomes more and more beautiful, and actually receives its form: 'To tend towards him is to be formed', *Ipsum intendere formari est*.[36] In the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* this notion occurs several times: 'The more ardently humble love intends towards God, the more it is conformed to him towards whom it is intending, because by this intending, he effects this in her.'[37] Or, as William has the Bridegroom say to the reader, 'You, intending towards the beautiful, so that you will become beautiful,

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[34] *Meditatio* IV, 17: 'deforma me a forma saeculi, cui me conformaueram; conforma me ciuibus tuis, ne inter eos deformis appaream' (Hourlier, p. 90, ll. 5–7). A similar formulation occurs in *Meditatio* V, 19 (Hourlier, p. 106, ll. 2–4).

[35] *Epistola* 50–51: 'Simplicitas ergo, initium aliquod in seipsa habens creaturae Dei, hoc est voluntatem simplicem et bonam, quasi futuri boni hominis informem materiam, in primordio conversionis suae, auctori suo eam offert formandam. Jam enim cum bona voluntate habens etiam initium sapientiae, id est timorem Domini, ex ipso colligit nec per se eam formari posse, nec quidquam tam expedire stulto, quam servire sapienti. Itaque homini se propter Deum subjiciens, ipsam ei bonam voluntatem committit in Deo formandam' (Déchanet, p. 184, ll. 1 – p. 186, l. 3). Compare *Epistola* 277: 'se coaptans et conformans'; *Epistola* 278: 'imago Dei reformatur in homine'; *Epistola* 286: 'Cum ergo ratio sapientiae conformata, format sibi conscientiam, et ordinat vitam' (Déchanet, pp. p. 366, l. 13; 368, l. 2; 372, l. 1–2, respectively).

[36] *De natura corporis et animae*, 105: 'Omnis quippe anima, sicut dictum est, tribus indiuiduis subsistit, memoria, consilio, uoluntate. […] Permanat enim a summo quod Deus est, per medium quod est anima, ad imum quod sunt corpora, unitae specimen Trinitatis […]. Haec omnia anima intellectu conspiciens, non iam tantum delectatur in sua formositate quam in forma formatrice, cui intendendo semper efficitur formosior. Ipsum enim intendere formari est', quoted from, *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry. De la nature du corps et de l'âme*, ed. by Michel Lemoine (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1988), p. 195.

[37] *Expositio* XIX, 90: 'Cui cum ardentius intendit humilis amor, ipsi cui intendit conformatur; quia intendendo in hoc ipsum ab ipso efficitur' (Verdeyen, p. 69, ll. 39–41).

you have experienced in yourself through the sense of love, what you experienced in me through the sense of faith.'[38] In the *Meditations*, where William talks about simple monks, the forming process leaves these monks like the icons Peter Damian described in some of his letters about exemplary hermits. These simple monks have become the ideal image and become models for others to follow:

> They do not impose a form on your love or conform it to themselves by subtle investigation; but your love itself, finding in them simple material, imposes its form on them and conforms them to itself in both affect and effect, so that, besides what is hidden within—namely, the glory and riches in the house of a good conscience—the inner light is reflected in their outer appearance, not by skilful effort but as it were by a natural complexion, to the extent that from a graceful simplicity of their countenance and their appearance, sometimes a certain provocation to your love comes forth and, just by the sight of them, inspires your love even in the rude and the barbarous. Nature returns to its origin, and without a teacher, they are taught by God, and when, while the Spirit helps them in their infirmity, their spirits turn into divine affections, their senses are modified by a certain spiritual discipline, and even their bodies assume a spiritual semblance, with faces more than human, and a singular grace.[39]

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[38] *Expositio* XXII, 106: 'Tu uero pulchro intendens, ut pulchra de pulchro fieres, hoc sensisti sensu amoris in te, quod sensu fidei sensisti in me' (Verdeyen, p. 78, ll. 68–70).

[39] *Meditatio* XII, 26: 'Qui non formant uel conformant sibi amorem tuum subtiliter indagando, sed ipse amor tuus, simplicem in eis inueniens materiam, format eos et conformat sibi et affectu et effectu, ut absque eo quod intrinsecus latet, gloria scilicet et diuitiis in domo bonae conscientiae, non artificiali conamine, sed quasi naturali quadam complexione lux interior in uultu eorum exteriori reluceat, intantum ut de uultus et habitus eorum uenusta quadam simplicitate, quaedam prouocatio caritatis tuae procedens, rudes etiam nonnumquam ac barbaros animos solo uisu ad amorem tuum compungat. Siquidem redeunte natura ad suam originem, absque doctore fiunt docibiles Dei, et cum spiritus eorum adiuuante infirmitatem eorum tuo Spiritu, in diuinas transeunt affectiones, spirituali quadam disciplina modificatis sensibus, etiam corpora eorum spirituales quasdam induunt effigies, et facies plusquam humanas et singularem quamdam gratiam habentes' (Hourlier, p. 206, l. 6 – p. 208, l. 22). Preceding this passage, William says that these simple monks have taken a shortcut, a *compendium*, the same idea as in *Speculum Fidei* 49 (Déchanet, pp. 114–116). On *simplicitas* as the monastic ideal, simplicity as the result of concentrating one's thoughts and will, see Jean Leclercq, art. 'Simplicité', *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, XIV (Paris: Beauchesne, 1990), cols 892–921; Jean Leclercq, *Études sur le vocabulaire monastique*, Studia Anselmiana, 48 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum S. Anselmi; 'Orbis Catholicus', Herder, 1961), 31–33; Pfeifer 'Wilhelms von Saint-Thierry Goldener Brief' I, 116–119. On the idea of *natura* in the christianized-Stoic sense in which it is used here see Baudelet, *L'expérience spirituelle*, p. 185; Jean-Marie Déchanet, 'Le "naturam sequi" chez Guillaume de Saint-Thierry', *Collectanea ordinis cisterciensium reformatorum*, 7 (1940–1945), 141–148.

 Affectus

What distinguishes William's icons from Peter Damian's is the overwhelming role
of *affectus* and its equivalents. 'Their spirits turn into divine *affectiones*', this phrase,
referring to the ultimate state of experiencing divine love, emphasizes one of the
meanings that *affectio* or *affectus* can have. Throughout William's works, *affici,
affectus, affectiones* and related words are prominent.[40] In *De dignitate amoris* he
defines *affectus* and *affectio*: '*Affectus* is what through some general power and
some permanent, firm and stable virtue, obtained by grace, holds the mind.
Affectiones, however, are the various feelings which the varying occurrence of
things and times carries along.'[41] These definitions point to *affectus* and *affectiones*
as psychological categories, in the traditional sense in which they were used from
antiquity onwards. In his writings William is not very strict in distinguishing them.
They certainly refer to the domain of feelings. However, what resonates above all in
these words is a notion of passivity: something brought about by the Holy Spirit and
God. Although God is not affected by our love, we are affected by him.[42] The Holy
Spirit so affects the will to himself,

> that the soul, loving God, and, in loving, experiencing him, all of a sudden is
> transmuted, not in the nature of the divinity, but nevertheless in some form of bliss
> beyond the human, within the divine, in the joy of illuminating grace, and the sense of
> illuminated awareness (*conscientia*).[43]

The notion of being operated upon is strongly present in William's use of *affectus*.
While our 'emotion' points to something which may potentially provoke activity,
here it is much more a question of being subject to an outer agency and its effects, as
for instance in the often used expression *bene affecta memoria*, or *bene affecta*

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[40] On the meaning of *affectus* see Pfeifer, 'Wilhelms von Saint-Thierry Goldener Brief' I,
103, note 91; and pp. 183–187.

[41] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 17: 'Affectus est qui generali quadam potentia et perpetua
quadam virtute firma et stabili mentem possidet, quam per gratiam obtinuit. Affectiones vero
sunt quas varias varius rerum et temporum affert eventus' (Davy, p. 92, ll. 8–11; PL 184, VI,
14, col. 389AB).

[42] *De contemplando deo* 7: 'Nos autem a te, ad te vel in te afficimur cum te amamus, qui
possumus misero aliquo modo esse, et non amare te: id est, esse et male esse' quoted from
Guillaume de Saint Thierry. La Contemplation de Dieu. L'Oraison de Dom Guillaume, ed. by
Dom Jacques Hourlier, SC 61 [=61bis] (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1959/1968), p. 82, ll. 8–
10. Compare *Disputatio adversus Abaelardum*, IV: 'In quo nequaquam Deus homini, sed
homo Deo afficitur, cum sicut dicit Apostolus, in hoc a Deo efficitur' (PL 180, col. 261C).

[43] *Speculum fidei* 101: 'Spiritus Sanctus, voluntatem hominis sic sibi afficit, ut Deum
amans anima, et amando sentiens, tota repente transmutetur, non quidem in naturam
divinitatis, sed tamen in quandam supra humanam, citra divinam formam beatitudinis; in
gaudium illuminantis gratiae, et sensum illuminatae conscientiae' (Déchanet, p. 170, ll. 2–7).

conscientia. As William comments on the words of the Canticle: 'The words which the Bridegroom directs to the Bride, are the work of affecting grace; the response of the Bride is the joy of a deeply affected *conscientia*',[44] or as he says in the *Speculum fidei*: 'There is no greater sweetness in this life, than when *conscientia*, in the image of its maker, in likeness to his goodness, finds itself deeply affected.'[45]

Imaginatio *and* Affectus

The citations so far refer to someone already on, or even at the end of their journey. The *Epistola* (174) shows how, in the first stage of this journey (the stage of the beginners—or, from the point of view of the monk, as *homo animalis*) one must have recourse to reading about and imagining the outer life of Christ. This imagination is thus a first instrument in attaining the desired affects: 'The souls whose senses are as yet untrained in and not fit for contemplating the sublime things [of divinity], love to be affected about the humble things [of your humanity], and to be resolved therein, as if in something similar to themselves.'[46] Christ descended to humanity so as to give them something to which they are similar. This is a recurring theme, in the *Meditations* as well as in the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* and the *Epistola*. In the *Meditations* for example William prays:

> Since I have not yet overcome the rudimentary stage of my sensory imagination, you will allow and will be pleased that my still infirm soul trains its nature through the mind's imagination about your humbleness, that is, that she embraces the manger of the child that was born and adores the sacred infancy, caresses the feet of the Crucified, holds and kisses his feet once he is risen, and puts her hand in the place of the nails and cries aloud: 'My Lord and my God!'[47]

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[44] *Expositio* XIX, 89: 'Vel sponsi alloquium opus est afficientis gratiae; sponsae responsum ipsum gaudium bene affectae conscientiae' (Verdeyen, p. 68, ll. 12–14).

[45] *Speculum fidei* 102: 'Nec enim maior potest esse suavitas homini in hac vita, quam cum in imagine Conditoris, in similitudine bonitatis eius, invenit se bene affecta conscientia' (Déchanet, p. 172, ll. 8–11).

[46] *Meditatio* X, 3: 'deuotas sed infirmas adhuc animas, quae ad contuenda sublimia illa nondum habentes exercitatos et idoneos sensus, amant affici circa humilia tua et resolui, sicut circa similia sibi' (Hourlier, p.160, ll. 7–9).

[47] *Meditatio* X, 4: 'Cum enim sensualis imaginationis meae rudimenta necdum supergressus sim, permittes et gratum habebis ipsa mentis imaginatione circa humilia tua infirmam adhuc animam meam suam indolem exercere, scilicet nascentis amplecti praesepia et sanctam adorare infantiam, pendentis in cruce lambere uestigia, tenere et deosculari pedes resurgentis, mittere manum in loca clauorum et exclamare: Dominus meus et Deus meus' (Hourlier, p. 160, ll. 3–10). Compare *Epistola* 174: 'Hujusmodi tamen homini oranti vel meditanti, melius ac tutius, sicut jam dictum est, proponitur imago dominicae humanitatis, nativitatis ejus, passionis et resurrectionis; ut infirmus animus, qui non novit cogitare nisi

For this reason God has ordered the incarnation from all eternity:

> Among the main reasons for your incarnation this was not the least reason for you,
> that your small ones in the church, who still needed milk and not solid food, who
> could not yet think about you spiritually and according to your way, would have in
> you a form not unknown to them, which they, in the sacrifice of their prayers, could
> propose to themselves, without a scandal to faith, because they are not yet able to look
> into the splendour of your divine majesty.[48]

This stage has its own rewards, bringing about an *affectus* which is so much sweeter
as it is nearer to human nature,[49] but it leads on to the next stage: 'From the
sweetness of this imagination the soul deserves to be enlightened, and to warm
towards the affect of a spiritual prayer, in an unknown manner, starting to conceive,
from these very corporeal imaginations, some idea of the mysteries of piety.'[50] Once
the imagination of Christ's human life turns into an affect, the rational man,
according to the itinerary as sketched in the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, tries
to overcome this stage of the imagination and rise to the domain of the spirit: The
rational man struggles hard to overcome the first stage, where images are needed,
and grace then 'makes and conforms his mind, his life, his ways, and the
temperament of his body into one *affectum pietatis*, into one figure of charity, into

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corpora et corporalia, habeat aliquid cui se afficiat; cui, juxta modum suum pietatis intuitu
inhaereat' (Déchanet, p. 282, l. 1 – p. 284, l. 6).

[48] *Meditatio* X, 5: 'et de praecipuis incarnationis tuae causis hanc apud te fuisse non
minimam, ut paruuli tui in ecclesia tua lacte adhuc indigentes et non solido cibo, nec
spiritualiter et tuo te modo cogitare praeualentes, haberent in te non ignotam sibi formam
quam in sacrificio orationum suarum proponerent sibi absque fidei scandalo, non sufficientes
adhuc intueri in claritatem illam diuinae maiestatis tuae' (Hourlier, p. 162, ll. 5–12). The same
idea can be found in the *Epistola* 171: 'Animali vero, et novo in Christo homini, ad excitanda
ejus interiora, melius et tutius proponuntur legenda et meditanda Redemptoris nostri exteriora.
Ostendendum in eis exemplum humilitatis, provocatio caritatis, et affectus pietatis; et de
scripturis sanctis et sanctorum tractatibus patrum, moralia quaeque et planiora' (Déchanet, p.
280, ll. 3–8). See also *Expositio* III, 14: 'Et aliquando quidem qui sic est, proponit mentis suae
oculis dominum saluatorem, secundum formam humanam, et sicut homo ad hominem
humanam quamdam et quasi corpoream induit orationis affectionem, constituens sibi eum
quem orat, seipsum qui orat, rem quasi in medio pro qua orat, et secundum formam
constitutionis suae format etiam modum orationis suae' (Verdeyen, p. 25, ll. 49–55).

[49] *Epistola* 175: 'In quo pauperibus spiritu, et simplicioribus filiis Dei, tanto primo solet
esse affectus dulcior, quanto naturae humanae propinquior' (Déchanet, p. 284, ll. 1–3).

[50] *Expositio* III, 14: 'ex dulcedine ipsius animalis imaginationis saepe illuminari meretur,
et incalescere in affectum spiritualis orationis uel contemplationis, modo quodam sibimet
incognito, de imaginationibus ipsis corporeis quaedam sibi concipiens sacramenta pietatis,
plus hoc agente in corde simplici praestantis gratia quam studio precantis' (Verdeyen, p. 26,
ll. 61–66).

one God-seeking face.'[51] At this stage, as William explains, the Bridegroom places 'a certain likeness (*effigies*) of his knowledge, not some presumptuous fantasy, but a devout affection, in the sense-organ of his lover'.[52] The similitude that then informs the mind, happens 'without any representation by the imagination, but only by the purity of a simple affect and the sense of an enlightened love'.[53]

Many similar quotations can be found in this work illustrating this process from imaginative stage to the state of affect and 'sense'. The imagination is only a step in a process towards thinking about God in an appropriate way, as is illustrated by Jesus' words, in William's exegesis: 'As Jesus said to his disciples: it is fitting that I go, that is that I subtract the *persona* of my humanity from your sight.'[54] Images are thus a vehicle towards truth, both at the beginner's stage and later.[55] Behind the role of imagination is an important idea, which pervades all three stages. Jesus' humanity is contrasted with the idea of the region of unlikeness, the *regio dissimilitudinis*, or result of the Fall. The incarnation is a remedy for this unlikeness, as it made God similar to man, thereby providing man with a possibility of apprehending him.[56] This similarity resounds in the end of the process, once the reader comes to the state of the *homo spiritualis*:

> It is impossible to see the Highest Good without loving it, and impossible not loving it as much as it is seen, to the point where love advances into a certain similitude of the love which made God similar to man, through his humiliation into the human

[51] *Expositio* III, 16: 'Cumque adiuuante Spiritu sancto infirmitatem hominis, imagini Dei sua incipit species renouari, superueniens gratia rationem, mentem, uitam, mores, ipsum etiam corporis temperamentum, efficit et conformat in unum affectum pietatis, in unam effigiem caritatis, in unam faciem Deum exquirentis' (Verdeyen, p. 26, l. 89 – p. 27, l. 93).

[52] *Expositio* III, 17: 'collocat in sensu amantis et commodat aliquam cognitionis suae effigiem, non praesumpti phantasmatis, sed piae cuiusdam affectionis, quam uiuens adhuc in carne capere possit homo uel sustinere' (Verdeyen, p. 27, ll. 103–106).

[53] *Expositio* III, 18: 'hoc in ea absque omni phantastica imaginatione agente puritate simplicis affectus et illuminati sensu amoris' (Verdeyen, p. 27, ll. 120–122).

[54] *Expositio* III, 15: '*Expedit uobis ut ego uadam* (Joh. 16, 7), hoc est subtraham aspectibus uestris humanitatis meae personam' (Verdeyen, p. 26, ll. 74–75).

[55] *Expositio* III, 20: 'et si occurrunt imaginationes, seruiunt et adiuuant potius quam impediant' (Verdeyen, p. 29, ll. 180–181).

[56] *Expositio* XVI, 79: 'Conditi sane ad imaginem et similitudinem creatoris, cecideramus a Deo in nos per peccatum, et a nobis infra nos in tantum profundum dissimilitudinis, ut nulla esset spes. Sed uenit Filius Dei, aeterna sapientia, et inclinauit coelos suos, et descendit, et fecit de semetipso quiddam in nobis, quod simile esset nobis, quod apprehenderemus; et simile sibi, per quod leuaremur: cuius mysterii continua memoria, continua esset medicina' (Verdeyen, p. 63, ll. 87–94). Compare also *Expositio* XII, 61 (Verdeyen, p. 50, ll. 40–41). On the *regio dissimilitudinis* as an echo of Plotinus, see J.-M. Déchanet, *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry. Exposé sur Le Cantique des Cantiques*, SC 82 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1962), p. 164, note 1 and p. 200, note 5. Compare D. N. Bell, 'Greek, Plotinus and William of St.-Thierry', *Cîteaux*, 30 (1979), 221–248, who relativizes the neo-Platonic influence in William's thought.

condition, a similitude that would make man similar to God, by the glory of participated divinity. And thus it is sweet to man to be co-humiliated with the highest majesty; co-impoverished with the Son of God; conformed to divine wisdom, feeling (*sentienti*) in oneself the same as our Lord Jesus Christ (compare Vulgate Philippians 2. 5).[57]

Thus, throughout, the act of thinking of Christ is close to the *affectus* of love that the reader desires: 'The effect of our redemption is celebrated in us as often as the affect of the praying recollects it.'[58] The affect is closely connected to the imaginative state but does not end there, as the sequence of this passage makes clear. William explains that, through the intermediary of the image of Christ's passion, and through the thought of his goodness, one is led into an affect of the highest good,[59] or, as he says in his *Commentary on the Canticle*: 'Once he is made into the similitude of his maker, man becomes affected to God; that is he becomes one spirit with God.' [60]

Unity and Receptivity

As this last quotation (*Deo affectus*) makes clear, behind the emphasis on *affectus* is the desire to attain unity. *Afficere* and its derivations pervade William's language, which constantly points to the wish for adhesion, conformity, conjunction, association, and unity. 'Prayer is the affection of the man who adheres to God.'[61] By its own senses—that is, by the mediation of love, the soul is conjoined to God.[62]

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[57] *Epistola* 272: 'Impossibile quippe est videri summum bonum et non amari; necnon tantum amari, quantum datum fuerit videri; quousque amor proficiat in aliquam similitudinem amoris illius, qui Deum similem fecit homini, per humiliationem humanae conditionis, ut hominem similem Deo constituat, per glorificationem divinae participationis. Et tunc dulce est homini cohumiliari summae majestati; compauperari Filio Dei; divinae sapientiae conformari, hoc sentienti in seipso quod et in Christo Ihesu Domino nostro' (Déchanet, p. 362, ll. 1–10). On this passage featuring William's newly coined words *cohumiliari* and *compauperari*, see Pfeifer 'Wilhelms von Saint-Thierry Goldener Brief', II, 30–33.

[58] *Meditatio* X, 7: 'Totiens enim redemptionis nostrae in nobis celebratur effectus quotiens eam recolit supplicantis affectus' (Hourlier, p. 162, ll. 5–6).

[59] *Meditatio* X, 8: 'Mediante namque imagine passionis tuae, Christe, cogitatum a nobis circa nos bonum tuum repente nos transfert in summi boni affectum' (Hourlier, p.164, ll. 5–7).

[60] *Expositio* XIX, 90: 'Cumque efficitur ad similitudinem facientis, fit homo Deo affectus; hoc est cum Deo unus spiritus' (Verdeyen, p. 69, ll. 41–43).

[61] *Epistola* 179: 'Oratio vero est hominis Deo adhaerentis affectio' (Déchanet, p. 288, l. 1).

[62] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 18: 'Sicut enim corpus suos quinque habet sensus, quibus anime conjungitur, vita mediante; sic et anima suos quinque sensus habet, quibus Deo conjungitur, mediante caritate' (Davy, p. 94, ll. 21–24; PL 184, VI, 15, col. 390BC). Compare *De natura et dignitate amoris* 27: 'Affectus autem caritatis Deo indissolubiliter inherens […]. Et cum

Writing about the state of the *homo rationalis*, William suggests ever growing intensity, from affecting to adhering to inhering:

> The only great and good thing is when the soul (*animus*), great and good, looks upward, and affects what is above it, and the devout image hastens to adhere to its similitude. The soul itself is the image of God, and because of the fact that it is the image, it becomes intelligible to it that it can and must inhere to him whose image it is.[63]

On the theoretical–theological level, behind William's epistemological and psychological positions and their ramifications, his view of monastic life is the same as the view of Richard and Hugh. The goal of this life should be to restore the lost image.[64] But, as many of the quotations given so far make clear, underneath the urge to restore the image, and to reach the *visio dei*, is the yearning for a lost unity, the desire to remove the separation which, in William's thought, had resulted from the Fall.[65] The process of transforming, conforming and intending aims towards unity and absorption in divinity. In his evocations of the end and goal of the monastic life this is repeated over and over:

> When we love you, our spirit is affected by your Holy Spirit, by whom, when he lives in us, we have the love of God poured out in our hearts. […] We love you, or you love yourself in us, we by affect, you in effect, you make us one in you, by your unity, that is your Holy Spirit himself, whom you have given to us, so that, just as for the Father to know the Son is nothing else but to be what the Son is, and for the Son to know the Father is nothing else but to be what the Father is—that is why the Gospel says: Nobody knows the Father but the Son, and nobody knows the Son but the Father—and just as for the Holy Spirit to know or to comprehend the Father and the Son is nothing

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anime illi vacat Deo vacare, Deo inherere, Deo efficitur similis per devotionis pietatem, et voluntatis unitatem' (Davy, p. 104, l. 3; ll. 11–12; PL 184, VIII, 23, col. 394BC).

[63] *Epistola* 209: 'Denique hoc solum magnum et bonum, cum magnus et bonus animus suspicit et miratur, et affectat quod supra eum est, et adhaerere festinat similitudini suae devota imago. Ipse enim imago Dei est, et per hoc quod imago ejus est, intelligibile ei fit et posse se, et debere inhaerere ei cujus imago est' (Déchanet, p. 314, ll. 1–6). See also Pfeifer, 'Wilhelms von Saint-Thierry Goldener Brief' I, 215 : *adhaerere* becomes *inhaerere*. Compare *Epistola* 277: 'Illi veritati, illi caritati, illi aeternitati se conformans, in istis se ordinans, illis non supervolitans judicando, sed suspiciens desiderando, vel inhaerens amando' (Déchanet, p. 366, ll. 10–13).

[64] See *Epistola* 208: 'Ab ipso enim ad ipsum conditus est rationalis animus, ut ad ipsum sit conversio ejus, ut ipse sit bonum ejus; hic autem ex illo bono bonus. Ad imaginem et similitudinem ejus conditus est; hoc est ut quamdiu hic vivitur, quam propius, quam proprius potest accedat ad eum similitudine, a quo sola receditur dissimilitudine; ut sit hic sanctus, sicut ille sanctus est; in futuro beatus futurus, sicut ille beatus est' (Déchanet, p. 314, ll. 1–8).

[65] Ruh, *Geschichte der abendländischen Mystik*, I, 319 calls William: 'diesen Spiritualen der Sehnsucht'. On *Unitas spiritus* as *Leitmotiv*, see Pfeifer 'Wilhelms von Saint-Thierry Goldener Brief', II, 23.

else but to be what the Father and the Son are, so for us, who have been created in your image, and who had, through Adam, withered away from it, but are renewed day by day (II Corinthians 4. 16) towards it by Christ, for us who love God, to love and fear God, to observe his commands, is nothing else than to be, and to be one spirit with God.[66]

William's qualifications of this final unity—that man 'will not become God, but what God is' (saintly on earth and fully blissful in the future)[67] cannot detract from the longing for this unity, which is ever resounding in William's vocabulary, of *adhaerere*, *inherere*, *conjungere*. This unremitting longing is permeated by the tension that runs through the whole of William's monastic itinerary. In his *Epistola*, William pays much attention to the ascetic aspects of the novice's life, and writes at length about the efforts the reader has to undertake. However, in the end (and much more emphatically than in Richard of Saint-Victor) the process is not so much one of taking active steps, as one of aiming at a state of receptivity. From the epistemological point of view as well passivity reigns in the end. The spiritual understanding works in a different way from normal understanding, as became clear at the end of the *Epistola*, where understanding depends on the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* the same idea occurs: 'when the soul understands by natural understanding, it seizes what it understands; but in the spiritual understanding it *is* seized, and the Spirit blows wherever it pleases.'[68]

In the prologue to his *Commentary on the Canticle*, the limited role of human agency is brought to the fore, when William invokes the Holy Spirit:

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[66] *De contemplando deo* 11: 'Sed cum te amamus, afficitur quidem spiritus noster, spiritui tuo sancto: per quem habitantem in nobis, caritatem dei habemus diffusam in cordibus nostris. Cumque amor tuus, amor patris ad filium, amor filii ad patrem, spiritus sanctus habitans in nobis ad te est quod est id est amor omnem captivitatem Syon id est animae nostrae omnes affectiones in se convertens, et sanctificans, amamus te, vel amas tu te in nobis, nos affectu, tu effectu, unum nos in te efficiens per unitatem tuam id est ipsum spiritum sanctum tuum, quem dedisti nobis, ut sicut non est aliud patri nosse filium, nisi hoc esse quod est filius, nichil aliud filio nosse patrem, nisi hoc esse quod est pater; unde in evangelio: Nemo novit patrem nisi filius, et nemo novit filium nisi pater, et sicut spiritui sancto nichil est aliud nosse vel comprehendere patrem et filium, quam hoc esse quod est pater et filius; ita nobis qui ad ymaginem tuam conditi sumus, et ab illa per Adam invetustati, per Christum ad illam renovamur de die in diem, amantibus deum nichil sit aliud amare et timere deum et mandata ejus observare, quam esse, et unum spiritum cum deo esse' (Hourlier, p. 104, l. 102 – p. 106, l. 122). On the importance of the trinitarian aspect of William's teaching, of which this passage is only one of many examples, see Verdeyen, *La Théologie Mystique*.

[67] *Epistola* 258: 'non quidem ut sint Deus, sed sint tamen quod Deus est, sint sancti, futuri plene beati, quod Deus' (Déchanet, p. 350, ll. 7–8).

[68] *Expositio* XVI, 76: 'Quod enim naturali intellectu intelligit anima, capit; illo autem intellectu non tam capit quam capitur. […] Sanctus etenim Spiritus sicut ubi uult spirat, sic quando uult et quomodo uult et quantum uult' (Verdeyen, p. 61, ll. 16–21).

that we be filled with your love, O love, to understand the song of love; that we ourselves are made into participants of the holy conversation of the Bridegroom and the Bride; that is enacted in us what is read by us. Where the issue is about affects, it is not easily understood unless by people who are similarly affected.[69]

The inability to explain in words to others what the experience is about, is a recurring theme, connected with the dependence on divine initiative. Commenting on the words from the Canticle 'The voice of my Beloved' (*vox dilecti mei*) the same sort of 'being affected' is audible:

In this state of mind, what happens has nothing to do with words, but by virtue of spiritual understanding and through pious affects this single word happens: The Word that is with God, God the Word, which is enacted, or happens in the Bride, in that which is worked in her.[70]

Or again: 'The Word of God is enacted in the heart of who hears and loves, when, as is said, the hearing of the almighty Word is put to effect in that which is heard.'[71] Instead of the reader composing his life, it is the Bridegroom who composes the Bride's life and manners.[72] A similar notion of passivity, instead of activity, is present very often, implying a sense of powerlessness:

[The faithful soul] as long as she is struggling in temptations, does not know what happens in her; often, she makes progress although she does not know; and she meets approval when she thinks she is reproached. In her affliction, she is humiliated, in her humiliation, she is cleansed; and while the humility which she has acquired buries her inside herself, in the manyfold sorrows that holy simplicity is formed, not by her, but in her.[73]

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[69] *Expositio* I, 3: 'ut amore tuo repleamur, o amor, ad intelligendum canticum amoris; ut et nos colloquii sancti sponsi et sponsae aliquatenus efficiamur participes; ut agatur in nobis quod legitur a nobis. Vbi enim de affectibus agitur, non facile, nisi a similiter affectis capitur quod dicitur' (Verdeyen, p. 21, ll. 52–56).

[70] *Expositio* XXVIII, 137: 'In hoc siquidem statu mentis nequaquam uerbis res agitur, sed spiritualis uirtute intellectus et affectuum pietate unum ibi uerbum fit: Verbum quod est apud Deum, Deus Verbum, quod fit in sponsa, in eo quod operatur in ea' (Verdeyen, p. 96, ll. 39–43).

[71] *Expositio* XXXIV, 157: 'Verbum Dei fit in corde audientis et amantis, cum, sicut dictum est, auditus omnipotentis Verbi iam effectus est in id quod auditur' (Verdeyen, p. 110, ll. 18–20).

[72] *Expositio* XXXIV, 157: 'componit uitam et mores, cum dicit: *formosa mea*' (Verdeyen, p. 110, ll. 26–27).

[73] *Expositio* XIII, 66: 'Fidelis quippe anima, quamdiu uel in tentationibus laborat, quid in seipsa agatur ignorat; saepe et cum nescit, proficit; et approbatur, cum se reprobari aestimat. Afflicta etenim humiliatur; humiliata purgatur; et dum infra semetipsam deponit eam assumpta humilitas in multiplicitate dolorum, non ab ipsa, sed tamen in ipsa formatur sancta illa simplicitas' (Verdeyen, p. 54, l. 36 – p. 55, l. 41).

In the *Epistola* it is emphasized that the above does not mean that the reader must not work hard, and be intent on receiving the affects. Similarly, in the *Commentary on the Canticle*, talking about the one who has made progress and already experiences the sequence of presence and absence, William points out to others who have not yet experienced this, that it is connected with the work not of one day, but of a long time.[74] Even after having felt the presence of the Bridegroom, there is always the danger of being content with these delights, and avoiding the necessary efforts. Beginners, once they have these sweet experiences, may think that they can rest and that they have escaped all future need to combat vices, but the need for vigilance remains.[75]

However, the need to struggle against vices and temptations is incorporated in a much more prominent language of passivity. In *De dignitate amoris* William compares the novice, in whom love is still blind, with a blind man who works with his hands. Someone who can see trains the blind man to do his work, teaching him the routine rather than the technical skill of the work. In the same way, blind love has to be trained from the outside.[76] What follows supports the notion of passivity: 'What we have put together above as things to be observed, is not yet there in an affect but in desire and the instruction by reason.'[77] After some training, however, the soul begins to collect 'some new and sweet young feelings (*affectiunculas*), in which she rests in peace as long as they are there, and feels crucified when they are taken away and do not come back at one's calling'.[78]

What resonates in this last quotation, besides the passivity of the reader, is the transitory character of the feelings of presence, and an ultimate unavailability. This transience often transpires in the *Meditations*, where William addresses God: 'I sometimes feel you passing by, you don't stay with me, but you go by me as I call

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[74] *Expositio* IV, 29: 'Discant qui non didicerunt; conuertantur ad uidendum; fiant curiosi ad experiendum, quomodo actitentur haec in conuersatione uel conscientia eorum, qui conuersi ad dominum *in nouitate uitae ambulant*. […] Omnisque hic sancti exercitii labor in corde amantis uel uita proficientis non unius diei est, sed multi temporis' (Verdeyen, p. 34, ll. 106–115).

[75] *Expositio* XIII, 65 (Verdeyen, p. 53, l. 4 – p. 54, l. 32).

[76] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 11: 'in usum quemdam potius quam in artem eum agens suscepti operis' (Davy, p. 82, l. 30–31; PL 184, IV, 9, col. 385C). Compare *Epistola* 43: 'Sunt etenim animales […] quasi caeci' (Déchanet, p. 178, ll. 1–4). See also Pfeifer, 'Wilhelms von Saint-Thierry Goldener Brief', I, 103.

[77] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 11: 'Quecumque enim observanda supratexuimus, nondum sunt in affectu, sed in desiderio et rationis magisterio' (Davy, p. 84, ll. 1–3; PL 184, IV, 9, col. 385D).

[78] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 13: 'Ex quo jam diu laborans anima, insolitas quasdam et dulces affectiunculas incipit colligere, in quibus requiescit tenere cum adsunt, cruciatur, cum auferuntur, et non redeunt ad votum' (Davy, p. 86, ll. 4–7; PL 184, IV, 10, col. 386C).

after you.'[79] One must prepare oneself, but the result, of sweet affection, is not on call. This becomes vaguely audible in the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*: 'The man of desire recommends the gift of the initial knowledge of God he has got, not to his own arbitrary will in his *memoria*, but to the grace of God in his *conscientia*, where, returning to prayer, he looks for it again.'[80] Much stronger, and connected with an exposition on the dangers of temptations, is a warning in *De natura et dignitate amoris*: after the experience of sweetness the reader may think that 'what he has been given to sustain him on his journey, is sufficient, and, stopping to proceed, he actually begins to fall back.'[81] Unavailability is even more explicit in *De contemplando deo*, where the narrator/reader receives a sweet comforting taste, but as in passing, and it cannot be retained:

> And when, in search for it, or receiving or experiencing it, I am eager to commit some of its outlines more firmly impressed to my memory, or even try to help my weak memory by writing something down, I am forced by reality and experience to learn what is said in the gospel about the Spirit: And you know not where he comes from or where he goes (John 3. 8).[82]

This unavailability is connected with the impossibility of making those who are not similarly affected understand this experience.[83] It also points to a more general inexpressibility, which in the end corresponds with ultimate incomprehensibility and unattainability, as becomes clear in William's efforts to explain faith in the *Speculum fidei*: 'If only we could understand what we are saying. […] We throw out words, we are enveloped in words, and we are thereby blocked away from what can be expressed in no words, and yet only by words something can be said about it'[84] Talking about the wonderful *conjunctio* between God and man symbolized by the

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[79] *Meditatio* II, 4: 'Si aliquando sentio te transeuntem, non stas mihi sed praeteris me clamantem post te, sicut Cananaeam illam' (Hourlier, p. 52, ll. 1–2).

[80] *Expositio* III, 18: 'Hanc uir desideriorum acceptam a Deo commendat non tam arbitrio suo in memoria, quam gratiae Dei in conscientia sua; unde rediturus ad orationem eam repetat' (Verdeyen, p. 27, ll. 109–111).

[81] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 14: 'Quod enim a Patre pio in via accipit ne deficiat, sic incipit habere quasi sufficiat; et hic proficiendi metam constituens, ubi desinit proficere, ibi incipit deficere' (Davy, p. 86, ll. 23–25; PL 184, V, 11, col. 387A).

[82] *De contemplando deo* 12: 'Et cum de inquisitione ejus vel acceptione, vel usu, formata quaedam liniamenta memoriae gestio artius impressa committere, vel etiam memoriam labilem scripto juvare, re, et experimento cogor discere quid illud sit quod in evangelio dicis de spiritu: Et nescis unde veniat, aut quo vadat' (Hourlier, p. 114, l. 72 – p. 116, l. 77).

[83] *Expositio* I, 3: 'Vbi enim de affectibus agitur, non facile nisi a similiter affectis capitur quod dicitur' (Verdeyen, p. 21, ll. 55–56).

[84] *Speculum fidei* 115: 'Utinam intelligeremus quae dicimus. […] Nos vero verba iactamus, verbis involvimur, et impedimur ab eo quod nullis verbis exprimi potest, et tamen nonnisi verbis de eo aliquid dici potest' (Déchanet, p. 184, ll. 1–5).

'flowery bed' (*lectulus floridus*) in the Canticle (1. 15), William explains that the Canticle uses the words 'Bride' and 'Bridegroom' to express in human language the sweetness of that conjunction.[85] The sequence for what was quoted above on the *vox dilecti* again points to the limits of human expression:

> It is called a sound rather than a word, because it is not distinguished by syllables, it is not formed by language, but by pure affect in the illuminated understanding, while every bodily or rational perception is put to sleep or keeping holiday, and the Holy Spirit performs this whole matter in the sense of love.[86]

Reading and Language

Although the divine can only be indicated, this indication and evocation are incorporated in the discourse that is intended to form the reader. Indeed, as was seen before, this is the supposed principle behind the reading of most of William's texts: 'may what is read by us be performed in us', *ut agatur in nobis quod legitur a nobis*.[87] The reader is the scene for the drama: 'The Canticle has been written in the form of a play […], so that just as in reciting a play various persons and various roles come together, so in this Song persons and affects concur', to perform the love affair between the human soul and the divine Bridegroom.[88] Reading, for William as for the other authors, is to be seen as an intense digesting of the text. It results in the reader enacting in himself what he reads, or, in William's passive sense, having it enacted within oneself. Coming to the different parts of the play, that is, the different stages and their different sorts of prayer, the reader should 'turn into himself and

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[85] *Expositio* XX, 91: 'In hoc siquidem fit conjunctio illa mirabilis, […] incogitabilis illis etiam in quibus fit, hominis ad Deum, creati spiritus ad increatum; qui sponsa dicuntur ac sponsus, dum uerba quaeruntur quibus lingua hominis utcumque exprimi possit dulcedo et suauitas coniunctionis illius' (Verdeyen, p. 70, ll. 10–15).

[86] *Expositio* XXVIII, 137: 'Vox tamen potius dicitur quam uerbum, quia non distinguitur syllabis, non lingua formatur, sed puro fit affectu in illuminato intellectu, sopito vel feriato omni sensu corporis vel rationis; et totum rei negotium sancto Spiritu operante in sensu amoris' (Verdeyen, p. 96, ll. 43–47). See also earlier in the same: 'In hoc siquidem statu mentis nequaquam uerbis res agitur, sed spiritualis uirtute intellectus et affectuum pietate unum ibi uerbum fit: Verbum quod est apud Deum, Deus Verbum, quod fit in sponsa, in eo quod operatur in ea' (Verdeyen, p. 96, ll. 39–43).

[87] *Expositio* I, 3 (Verdeyen, p. 21, l. 54–55).

[88] *Expositio* II, 7: 'Scribitur autem canticum hoc in modum dramatis […] ut sicut in comoediis recitandis personae diuersae et diuersi actus, sic et in hoc cantico concurrere sibi uideantur personae et affectus' (Verdeyen, p. 23, ll. 41–44).

when he finds these stages in the Song of Songs, recognize them in himself'.[89] The same idea is suggested in *De dignitate amoris*, referring to the taste of scripture,

> when we begin not only to understand the inner sense of scripture and the power of the mysteries and sacraments of God, but even, so to speak, to feel it and touch it with some hand of experience, which happens only with the sense of the *conscientia* and the discipline of experience of him who understands, or even, I should say, who reads and feels in himself the goodness and power of the Lord.[90]

In the *Speculum fidei* 'faith suggests its understanding, in the full etymological meaning of *intellectus*, when he who believes reads in the affect of his heart what he believes'.[91]

The proposed content of this inner drama and reading is presented in a language full of feeling and adhering: *sentire, adhaerere*. Although William explains that, in the end, words must fall short, he creates a language of feeling. Words for tasting (*sapere*, *gustare*), and sweetness (*suavitas*), seem to tumble over each other. In a passage in one of the *Meditations*, for instance, William talks about the simple monks who have become a model for others:

> The affect by which they enjoy (*fruuntur*) you, can be felt (*sentiri*) with the perceptible sweetness (*sensibili quidem suavitate*) of some spiritual and divine joy (*gaudium*), but as the taste of food (*sapor cibi*) cannot be communicated to anyone but to him who tastes it (*gustanti*), so this taste (*sapor*) cannot be discussed by reason, nor exposed in words, nor conceived by the senses.[92]

These frequently delirious accounts of the process towards unity cannot conceal their incantatory character, trying to allay man's separation and to bring about divine presence. This language is, on the level of the author, expressive rather than

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[89] *Expositio* III, 10: 'ut studiosus ac pius lector, cantici ipsius lectionem percurrens, semper recurrat ad semetipsum, et cum inuenerit eos in cantico sancto, recognoscat eos in corde suo' (Verdeyen, p. 24, ll. 5–8).

[90] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 37: 'Cum enim Scripturarum interiorem sensum, et virtutem mysteriorum et sacramentorum Dei ceperimus non solum intelligere, sed etiam quadam, ut ita dicam, experientie manu palpare et tractare, quod non fit nisi quodam conscientie sensu, et experientie disciplina intelligentis, immo, ut plus dicam, intus in semetipsa legentis, et sentientis bonitatem et virtutem Dei' (Davy, p. 114, l. 30 – p. 116, l.1; PL 184, X, 31, col. 399AB).

[91] *Speculum fidei* 48: 'ista fidei suum suggerit intellectum, et plenam intellectus ethimologiam, cum qui credit, intus in affectu cordis legit quod credit' (Déchanet, p. 114, ll. 4–6).

[92] See *Meditatio* XII, 22: 'Affectus enim quo te amando fruuntur, sensibili quidem suauitate cuiusdam gaudii spiritualis uel diuini potest sentiri, sed sicut sapor cibi cuiuslibet nulli insinuari potest, nisi gustanti, sic sapor ille nec ratione discuti, nec exponi uerbis, nec sensibus potest concipi' (Hourlier, p. 204, ll. 6–10).

communicative,[93] but it also functions to exhort the reader to engage, or to be engaged in the process. In her analysis of the *Epistola*, Pfeifer has shown that the literary quality of William's language, and its rhetorical character, was meant to teach, delight and move the reader.[94] With his language of *adhaerere, affectus, sentire*, William orchestrates his readers in their experience of monastic life, including the ultimate *experientia* which he evokes. The result is not a copying of the text in oneself—the tracing of an exegesis in oneself and thus an unfolding of oneself—as is suggested in Richard of Saint-Victor's approach. Richard's sustained mode of exegesis, the very process of interpretation, offered a shield of reticence between the reader and what he reads about his inner life, but also between the reader and his ultimate goal, presented as the restoration of the *imago Dei*. This exegesis holds, as it were, the reader at one remove from himself. As far as exegesis was one of the 'techniques' to gain access to the divine (along with liturgy and the sacraments) Richard remained within tradition.[95] Apart from his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, William of Saint-Thierry does not offer exegetical works as Richard does—although his language is saturated with the Bible—and thus he does not have this way of access to the divine. But, by exploiting to the full the vocabulary of the affections, he sets out on a different approach. Indeed, he involves the reader in a language that does more than suggest an immediate access to one's self, be it as *conscientia* or *memoria*, as we shall see. Despite all the reservations on the theological level, on the level of the reading experience there is the impression of an immediate access to the divine, evoked, almost extorted by this language of feeling. The concomitant of the *experientia* of presence and absence is a sense of immediacy. It is this sense of immediacy that accounts for what is called the personal character of William's devotion.

Experientia *and Authenticity*

In the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, presence and absence alternate: the Bridegroom goes away and comes back, with the accompanying succession of

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[93] Compare Christine Mohrmann, 'Le style de Saint Bernard' in Christine Mohrmann, *Études sur le latin des chrétiens*, 4 vols (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1961–1977), II (1961), 347–367 (p. 352).

[94] Pfeifer, 'Wilhelms von Saint-Thierry Goldener Brief', pays attention throughout her work to the style, rhythm and language of the *Epistola* at the service of what is not a systematical survey but an *exercitium spiritualis* (II, 56–57).

[95] On liturgy and sacraments as 'techniques' see Pranger, 'God'. See also Cramer, *Baptism and Change*.

sadness about his absence and joy about his presence.[96] When presence is there, however, it is unmistakable:

> Indeed, when sometimes grace abounds to the point of a manifest experience of the thing, certain about God, all of a sudden something becomes sensible to the sense of illuminated love in some new way, which cannot be hoped to be attained by any corporeal sense, is not thinkable by any reason, is beyond the capacity of any understanding apart from the understanding of illuminated love.[97]

In what follows, *experientia*, *sentire* and *affectus* come together: 'To that man of God, sensing something about God is nothing else than to contract his similitude through the affect of a good experience according to the quality of the sensed form as well as of the sensing love.'[98] Again, in this dazzling convolution of the vocabulary of feeling, *experientia* is used to refer to something ultimate and irreducible and thus, at least by implication, beyond question. Especially in the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, this *experientia* abounds. It is, strictly speaking, subject to outward agency, just as *affectus*. It is referred to as *inspiratam experientiam*.[99] Often, *experientia* is doubled with *affectus*, or with *sensus* and *sentire*, words which can have a similar import, as in the often quoted *sentire de Domino in bonitate* (compare Sapientia 1. 1).[100] In Richard of Saint-Victor *experientia* covered all aspects of the monastic itinerary, the thought processes as well as the affections, and it was more than once related to the recurring awareness of one's failures. Reading Richard, it would be wrong to contrast experience and intellectual speculation: the latter can be the content of the former. In William of

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[96] *Expositio* IV, 29: 'Discant qui non didicerunt […] quomodo actitentur haec in conuersatione uel conscientia eorum, qui conuersi ad Dominum *in novitate vitae ambulant* (Rom. 6, 4). Quorum affectum uitamque totam sibi diuidunt dolor iste et hoc gaudium; dolor de sponsi absentia, gaudium de praesentia' (Verdeyen, p. 34, ll. 106–111).

[97] *Expositio* XIX, 90: 'Nam et cum nonnunquam superabundat gratia usque ad certam de Deo et manifestam experientiam rei, fit repente sensui illuminati amoris modo quodam nouo sensibile, quod nulli sensui corporis sperabile, nulli rationi cogitabile, nulli intellectui extra intellectum illuminati amoris fit capabile' (Verdeyen, p. 69, ll. 47–51).

[98] *Expositio* XIX, 90: 'Vbi homini illi Dei non est aliud de Deo sentire, quam per bonae experientiae affectum similitudinem eius contrahere secundum qualitatem et sensae speciei et sentientis amoris' (Verdeyen, p. 69, ll. 51–54).

[99] *Expositio* X, 54 (ed. Verdeyen, p. 46, l. 59).

[100] *Speculum fidei* 10: 'per affectum sentiendi *de Domino in bonitate*' (Déchanet, p. 70, l. 12). In the *Enigma Fidei*, William explains the three degrees of understanding by which to ascend to God. The first is to seek what is to be believed, the second how think and talk properly about what is properly believed. The third degree, however, consists of the experience of these things *in sentiendo de Domino in bonitate* (*Enigma fidei* 40, quoted from *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry. Deux traités sur la foi. Le miroir de la foi. L'énigme de la foi*, ed. by M.-M. Davy (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1959), p. 126; PL 180, col. 414B.

Saint-Thierry, the concept of experience seems to be narrowed down to (and becomes almost synonymous with) the experience of *affectus*, in its limited sense of being affected by God, and of the *sentire*:[101] As William writes: 'We can only understand the words of the Lord by the experience of being affected, and the inner sense of illuminated love.'[102] Not only is *experientia* narrowed into this meaning, in a sort of vicious circle, the *experientia*, the *affectus*, or the *sensus*, in itself become a yardstick of presence and absence: 'Whoever does not sense God, to whom he prays, as present as he should be sensed, prays in a troubled way, but who holds him present, enjoys this presence and adores him with gratitude.'[103]

As a consequence of William's emphasis on receptivity, and what is ultimately unavailability, the *affectus*, the *experientia*, the *sentire*, are imparted with an indicative quality, as they are the only measure of the state one is in—even if, on an articulated level, William would never endorse such an 'emotional absolutism'. He states this reservation in one of his *Meditations*: 'In myself I never love my affect unless with it I find myself affected about you.'[104] Nevertheless, in the whole of William's discourse, the affects tend to get a more autonomous status than William would be prepared to defend theologically. This results in a certain independence of the *affectus*, pointing towards the possibility of releasing it from its anchoring in divine agency, or in the theology about this divinity.

The most eloquent formulation of this autonomy of feeling can be found in the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*. Commenting on Canticle 1. 12, 'While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance' (*Dum esset Rex in accubitu suo, nardus mea dedit odorem suum*), William explains:

> Those who know how to shoot with arrows, say that there is a certain sense in the bowman's hand when he shoots, which makes him know, even when he can't see it, when the arrow has not gone in vain from the hand of the archer. In the same way, sometimes there appears to be in the faithful who is faithfully praying some sense of piety, by which it is not hidden from him when his prayer has reached God; and from the response of illuminating grace as well as from the sense of a good conscience, there remains no doubt that it has been heard.[105]

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[101] Pfeifer, 'Wilhelms von Saint-Thierry Goldener Brief', II, p. 8 n 624.

[102] *Speculum fidei* 120: 'Sed et illa verbi Domini […] tamen non aliquando intelligimus, nisi per affectus experientiam et interiorem sensum amoris illuminati' (Déchanet, p. 188, l. 1 – p. 190, l. 5).

[103] *Expositio* XV, 71: 'Qui enim Deum quem orat praesentem non sentit, sicut sentiendus est, anxie orat; qui uero praesentem tenet, praesente fruitur, gratanter adorat' (Verdeyen, p. 59, ll. 42–44).

[104] *Meditatio* XII, 28: 'sed in meipso nunquam meum amem affectum, nisi cum ipso affectum me inuenio de te' (Hourlier, p. 208, ll. 7–8).

[105] *Expositio* XV, 70: 'Aiunt qui sagittandi habent peritiam, sensum quemdam inesse manui sagittantis, per quem saepe non latet etiam non uidentem, cum non in uanum abiit

Many other passages convey the same, sometimes in the negative:

> That he lies in my heart, is manifested by the pious good will, the nourishing inside of working grace by the utterance of a confession pleasing to God. But where he pastured, where he was lying, I did not know; because, although all these things happened in me through the firm assent of will and the judgement of reason, I did not have the sense of a spiritual affection, by which the sweetness of his presence is felt.[106]

Sometimes the symptomatic quality almost amounts to self-sufficiency, strangely built into innocent ignorance about oneself. In the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, commenting on Canticle 1. 10: 'Your cheeks are comely, like a dove' (*Pulchrae sunt genae tuae, sicut turturis*), the cheeks of the Bride are her inner self, *sancta conscientia*. Although often in the time of temptation the soul does not know what happens inside her, she is making progress, and while she thinks of herself as deserving correction, in fact she meets approval. Divine consolations delight her and in the time of grace the mind, affected to God, and the flesh, affected to the mind, give her the appearance of a dove: 'And just as conscience is its own most truthful interpreter of the grace affecting her, so to other people the outer face is normally the witness of a deeply affected conscience.'[107]

This indicative character is woven into the pattern of receptivity and outside agency, as the following passage shows, with a comment on Canticle 1. 7 ('Show me […] where you pasture your flock'):

> Show me, she says. Inside, she says, in my heart, tell me that I may feel it in myself, through the sense of a most certain experience; inspire me, that I know by the proving experience of a joyful conscience, by what way of life, by what state of the soul, by what gift of grace do you nourish, in the affect of him whom you make worthy of it— you, who have mercy with whom you have mercy, and this is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of you who has mercy (compare Romans 9. 15-16)—the understanding of the lover about the knowledge of your truth, the abundance of your sweetness, and you consecrate his memory to yourself, in which you continually and

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sagitta de manu mittentis. Eodem modo quemdam pietatis sensum, nonnumquam constat inesse fideli fideliter orantis, per quem non eum latet, cum sua ad Deum peruenit oratio; et ex responso illuminantis gratiae et sensu bonae conscientiae nulla remanet dubitatio exauditionis' (Verdeyen, p. 58, ll. 3–10).

[106] *Expositio* XV, 74: 'Quaerebam ergo, ait sponsa, extra me quasi absentem, quem intra me iam habebam accubantem ac pascentem; cujus cubitum in corde meo manifestabat pietas bonae uoluntatis, pastum uero interius operantis gratiae, eructatio placitae Deo confessionis. Sed ubi pasceret, ubi cubaret, nesciebam; quia licet haec omnia in me agerentur bono assensu uoluntatis, ac judicio rationis, accubitum tamen, hoc est sensum spiritualis affectus, quo praesentiae eius suauitas sentitur, non habebam' (Verdeyen, p. 60, ll. 78–85).

[107] *Expositio* XIII, 66: 'Nam quemadmodum conscientia ipsa sibi uerissima interpres est afficientis gratiae, sic facies exterior testis esse solet ad homines bene affectae conscientiae' (Verdeyen, p. 55, ll. 55–57).

delightfully lay down; you yourself being to him, to his ardent love, the heat of the midday, as well as its cool, the splendour of its midday light, and its shade.[108]

There is thus a tension between actual presence and its manifestation in the affect. The indicative character of the affects is not without its pitfalls. Although grace is working in her, as long as her understanding does not yet find its joy in love, and love not yet enjoys in affect, the Bride does not seem to lie with her Bridegroom. Soon she discovers: 'I looked outside myself for the one, as if for someone absent, who was lying already in me.'[109] This tension is an underlying element in many of the *Meditations*, where the soul 'hates herself, because, as it seems to her, she does not love you'.[110] In the *Meditations* this is fitting in a discourse which first urges the reader to feel his own unworthiness, before leading him to knowledge of God. But it also strengthens the importance of one's feeling.[111] Against this background what is often seen as William's negative attitude towards the intellectual developments of his age deserves attention.

Anxiety as Argumentum Fidei

The emphasis on the *affectus*, and the epistemological role of *amor*, which many of the quotations so far illustrate, may well be connected with William's anti-dialectic attitudes. In his treatises on faith, the *Speculum fidei* and the *Enigma fidei*, one can certainly see the reflection of his conflicts with contemporaries, the most famous of which was the one he had with Abelard.[112] Whatever the implied controversy in these treatises, it is important to keep in mind that William addresses a monastic

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[108] *Expositio* X, 52: '*Indica*, ait, *mihi. Intus*, ait, in corde, dic mihi ut sentiam in memetipsa, per sensum certissimae experientiae; inspira mihi, ut sciam per experimentum fruentis conscientiae, quo uiuendi genere, quo statu animae, quo mentis habitu, quo dono gratiae, in affectu eius quem dignum facis, tu qui misereris cuius misereris—neque enim uolentis est hoc uel currentis, sed tui miserentis—pascis amantis intellectum de cognitione ueritatis tuae, de multitudine dulcedinis tuae, eiusque tibi sacras memoriam, in qua cubes iugiter ac delectabiliter; ipse ei exsistens amoris ardentis et cauma meridianum et refrigerium, splendor luminis meridiani et umbraculum' (Verdeyen, p. 45, l. 36 – p. 46, l. 46).

[109] *Expositio* XV, 74: 'Quaerebam ergo, ait sponsa, extra me quasi absentem, quem intra me iam habebam accubantem ac pascentem' (Verdeyen, p. 60, ll. 78–79).

[110] *Meditatio* II, 14: 'ut oderit se quia, ut sibi uidetur, non te amat' (Hourlier, p. 62, ll. 13–14).

[111] On a similar purpose within Anselm's *Meditations*, see Southern, *Saint Anselm*, pp. 91–137; Pranger, *The Artificiality of Christianity*, pp. 107–135.

[112] On William's literary disputes with Abelard, as well as the earlier one with Rupert of Deutz and the later one with William of Conches, see Piero Zerbi, 'William of Saint-Thierry and His Dispute with Abelard', in *William, Abbot of St.-Thierry: A Colloquium on the Abbey of St.-Thierry*, pp. 181–203.

public.[113] His polemical remarks in the *Speculum fidei* (against people who discuss the topic of grace, instead of submitting to it) also serve to define the boundaries between believers and non-believers, and (one cannot avoid thinking) between William's monastic readers and outsiders in general:

> due justice hardens whom it wills by justly abandoning someone, and undue pity has mercy with whom it wills by coming to his rescue. Where the one who was helped offers his good and free will, and receives faith, the deserted and reprobate comes with his questioning and deserves damnation. He says: 'of what does God complain? Who can resist his will?' Let him who has hope tremble where he who despairs has such nerve. Let him not ask for an account, but implore mercy: and let him learn from the one who is condemned, what he would deserve himself if grace did not come to his help.[114]

The chosen can see manifestations indicating that they are on the right road, and this is obvious to others as well, as they keep away from injustice.[115] The proud man comes to the door of faith and is invited in, yet he stays out and argues with the porter about why one is admitted, another excluded, until the door is shut and he finds himself outside. The simple mind works on his salvation with fear and trembling, and 'does not set his mouth against the heavens' (compare Vulgate Psalm 72. 9), aware that it is not in the power of the one who wills, or runs, but of God who takes pity on the sinner (Romans 9. 16).[116] What, in outsiders, is blameworthy

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[113] See Déchanet's Introduction in *Speculum fidei*, pp. 14–15.

[114] *Speculum fidei* 13: 'In quo, in filiis Adae venientibus ex massa dampnationis antiquae, quem vult iuste deserendo indurat debita iustitia; cuius vult, subveniendo miseretur indebita misericordia. Ubi offert bonam et liberam voluntatem, et accipit fidem adiutus, iactat quaestionem et meretur dampnationem desertus et reprobatus. Dicit enim: *Quid adhuc queritur? Voluntati enim eius quis resistit?* (Romans 9. 19) Tremat qui sperat, ubi sic audet qui desperat. Non quaerat rationem, sed imploret miserationem; et ex eo qui reprobatur, nisi subveniret gratia, discat quid et ipse merebatur' (Déchanet, p. 76, l. 11 – p. 78, l. 1).

[115] *Speculum Fidei* 14: 'Noti ergo et praecogniti in Dei praescientia, notificantur etiam in conscientia sua in quantum *invocant nomen Domini* (Psalm 115. 17; II Timothy 2. 19) et *testimonium reddit Spiritus sanctus* conscientiae eorum, *quod sint filii Dei* (Romans 8. 16); noti etiam fiunt hominibus, in quantum discedunt *ab iniquitate* (II Timothy 2. 19), prae ceteris hominibus' (Déchanet, p. 78, ll. 1–5).

[116] *Speculum Fidei* 16 – 17: 'Venit enim ad ostium fidei superbus et elatus; et dum vocatur ad credendum, et invitatur ad ingrediendum, stat et disputat contra ostiarium: cur alio admisso, alius excludatur; donec iusto iudicio ostiarii clauditur ei ostium; et de admissis et exclusis disceptans, ipse inter exclusos invenitur. Dicit enim ad singula quae non capit: *Durus est hic sermo*, durior ipse; et abiens et conversus retro, in eis quae retro sunt ordinatur. Pauper vero spiritu qualium est regnum Dei, cum timore et tremore salutem suam operans, nec ponens in caelum os suum, venit ac plorat, et ut admittatur orat […] Non ergo volentis neque currentis, sed miserentis est Dei, et quod bene vis, o homo, et quod credis' (Déchanet, p. 80, ll. 8–18 – ll. 1–2).

curiosity and pride, turns out to be incorporated in the monastic itinerary of the elected: doubts and hesitations occur even in the faithful, due to negligence, or rather to the lightness of our natural fervour to rationalize.[117] There will always be a little sting of doubt, but in the believers this is the very sign of faith—a *verae fidei manifestum argumentum*.[118] The other side of this is that people who question predestination show, by that very act of questioning, that they are outsiders.

William refers to the *Speculum fidei* in his *Epistola*, where he explains his reason for writing it. It was inspired by his concern for brothers whose anxiety in matters of faith pleases him as a sign of their faith and love.[119] Thus William's treatment of predestination is not only part of his polemic with contemporaries, or part of his edification of his brothers on this point; it also shows how predestination and its manifestations function as a guarantee of the intra-monastic world. These issues have the same role in the *Meditations*, where, in the first meditation, they set the scene for the reader. They emphasize the monk's state of utter dependence and misery. Within the limits thus defined, the tormented writer and reader eventually tends to find affirmation of his faith in his desire: 'Impossible, that he who is so troubled in his desire of you, does not believe in you, that he who desires you to the extent that he despises everything else, even himself, does not love you.'[120]

Thus *experientia*, *affectus, sentire*, taken as the indications of the state one is in, become foundational. It is presence or absence, as it is felt and experienced by the reader, that defines monastic experience, rather than the process of expanding and concentration of thought and feeling, as upheld by Hugh of Saint-Victor and by Richard of Saint-Victor. Despite the unavailability and dependence on grace—or maybe because of it—the experience, when it is there, conveys a sense of authenticity, of exclusivity, perhaps even superiority.

Memoria *and* Conscientia

A paradox thus results from William's emphasis on passivity of the *affectus* and on divine unavailability, on the one hand, and, on the other, the importance of

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[117] *Speculum Fidei* 29: 'Sed et cum in corde ebullire incipiunt sensuum carnalium temptationes, scandala fidei, tristes haesitationes, et quaestiones tenebrosae, quibus non tam ex placito voluntatis, quam ex incuria neglectae mentis, vel levitate naturalis de rationalitate fervoris, fidelis etiam animus, nonnumquam caligare solet' (Déchanet, p. 92, ll. 1–6).

[118] *Speculum Fidei* 34: 'Cum haec ipsa timoris et doloris anxietas, verae fidei manifestum argumentum sit' (Déchanet, p. 98, ll. 1–2).

[119] In the letter of dedication preceding the *Epistola*, 4–5 (Déchanet, p. 132).

[120] *Meditatio* II, 14: 'Absit autem ut non credat in te, quae sic anxiatur desiderio tui; ut non amet te, quae desiderat te usque ad contemptum omnium quae sunt, et etiam sui' (Hourlier, p. 62, ll. 14–16).

indications of presence in the affect and the experience. Passivity and unavailability strangely seem to strengthen the sense in which there is an underlying subject of the affects.

The strong sense of a subject, meanwhile, is couched in the familiar terms of *conscientia*, and *memoria*—often together with its Augustinian correlatives *intellectus* and *voluntas*. As is now clear, the meaning of *conscientia* is much broader than our modern *conscience*. It points to an inner self-awareness. What resonates in it is the traditional etymological meaning of 'knowledge of the heart' (*cordis scientia*), even though William does not use this expression.[121] *Cor*, *memoria* and *conscientia* are the center where the inner life takes place. In the *Epistola*, *cor*, *conscientia*, and the 'memory affected by God' (*de deo affecta memoria*) are used almost as synonyms, to indicate the person who, being alone with God, is never less alone than when he is by himself. In that situation, 'in the light of truth, in the serenity of a pure heart, spontaneously the pure conscience opens up to itself, and freely the memory, affected about God, extends into itself.'[122] At the end of the *Epistola* it is the *beata conscientia* who, once the *homo spiritualis* becomes one, and one spirit with God, finds herself in the middle of the embrace and kiss of the Father and the Son.[123] The 'green bed' (*floridus lectulus*) which symbolized the *conjunctio* between God and man is the joyful conscience, and the joy within her of the Holy Spirit.[124] Memory and conscience are the *locus accubitus*, the place of the presence of the Bridegroom,[125] and that is where the Bride has to look for him:

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[121] See Morrison, *Understanding Conversion*, pp. 94–55. For *conscientia* as *cordis scientia*, compare Peter of Celle, *De conscientia*, in *La Spiritualité de Pierre de Celle (1115–1183)*, ed. by Jean Leclercq, Études de Théologie et d'Histoire de la Spiritualité, 7 (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1946), pp. 193–230 (p. 199).

[122] *Epistola* 30: 'Cum quo enim Deus est, numquam minus est solus quam cum solus est. […] Tunc in luce veritatis, in sereno mundi cordis, ultro patet sibi pura conscientia, et libere se in se fundit affecta de Deo memoria' (Déchanet, p. 168, ll. 1–7). Compare Cicero, in *De officiis* III, 1, where Cato is quoted as saying about Scipio the Elder: 'P. Scipionem […] dicere solitum scripsit Cato […] numquam se minus otiosum esse, quam cum otiosus, nec minus solus, quam cum solus esset'; see also *De Republica* I, 17.

[123] *Epistola* 263: 'cum in amplexu et osculo Patris et Filii, mediam quodammodo se invenit beata conscientia; cum modo ineffabili, incogitabili, fieri meretur homo Dei, non Deus, sed tamen quod est Deus: homo ex gratia quod Deus ex natura' (Déchanet, p. 354, ll. 9–13).

[124] *Expositio* XX, 91: 'Lectulus floridus est amoena conscientia, et gaudium in ea Spiritus sancti' (Verdeyen, p. 70, ll. 2–3); *Expositio* XXI, 102: 'Sic ergo quaecumque hic de lectulo florido […] dicuntur ab sponsa, non sunt aliud, quam in cor suum conscium Deum inuitans pia conscientia' (Verdeyen, p. 76, ll. 47–50).

[125] *Expositio* XV, 71: 'Locus ubi cubitus uel accubitus sponsi et sponsae memoria est, intellectus et amor' (Verdeyen, p. 58, ll. 29–30). Compare *Expositio* X, 52 (Verdeyen, p. 45, l. 36 – p. 46, l. 46).

> She looks for him best in her room, she who always endeavors to have him always with her in her room, preparing the room of her heart for him, that she has him in her conscience and her meditation, in her understanding and her loving feeling, in her pious obedience, with devout work as a witness.[126]

Passivity is suggested again when the presence of the *Sponsus* is not in what one commits to memory oneself, but in 'a memory deeply affected, in a mind illuminated in the light of his face, the anointing of the Holy Spirit who teaches everything', exemplified by the comment on Canticle 1. 4: 'Draw me after you, we will run in the fragrance of your ointments' (*Trahe me post te*, ait Sponsa, *in odorem unguentorum tuorum curremus*): 'The fragrance of the ointments that disappear with him, is a sensation that inheres in the memory of the sweetness that went away, and in what remains of the thought of it, a pleasing memory in the recollection of the consolation enjoyed.'[127]

The role of memory is connected to its place in William's Augustinian anthropology.[128] Its most explicit formulation can be found in *De natura et dignitate amoris*:

> When God the Trinity created man in his own image, he formed a certain similitude of the Trinity in him […]. And when he imparted the breath of life, the spiritual power, that is, the intellectual power—breath and spiracle express just that—to the face of the new man, and the power of life, that is animal power—the word life expresses that; and, by imparting that, created man, he placed at the very top the power of memory, so that he would always remember the power and goodness of his Creator. Immediately, and without any delay, memory begot reason from itself, and both memory and reason brought forth the will. Thus, memory possesses and contains the direction to which to tend, reason knows that it should tend towards this direction, and the will tends. […] Thus, so that the rational soul created in man would inhere in God,

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[126] *Expositio* XL, 185: 'Optime autem quaerit eum in cubili, quae semper ad hoc satagit, ut semper eum secum habeat in cubili, cubile cordis ei praeparando, ut habeat eum in conscientia et meditatione, in intellectu et affectu, in obsequio pietatis, cum testimonio deuotae operationis' (Verdeyen, p. 125, ll. 60–64). Compare *Expositio* XII, 60: 'In mente tua si fueris mecum, ibi cubabo tecum, et inde pascam te. Quaere ergo Deum in simplicitate; senti de eo in bonitate; satage eum jugiter habere in memoria, et amando intelligere, et intelligendo amare; et in sensu bonitatis ejus percipies sensum aeternitatis ejus, uitae modum, statum mentis bonae' (Verdeyen, p. 50, ll. 32–36).

[127] *Expositio* VI, 40: 'Sponsi enim praesentia bene affecta de ipso memoria est, et mens lumine uultus eius illuminata, et unctio Spiritus sancti docens de omnibus; odor unguentorum cum eo abeuntium sensus quidam est adhuc memoriae inhaerens abeuntis suauitatis, et in reliquiis cogitationis festiua memoria de recordatione habitae consolationis' (Verdeyen, p. 39, l. 33 – p. 40, l. 38).

[128] On *memoria* in William of Saint-Thierry, see Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories*, pp. 200–208.

the Father claims memory; the Son reason, the Holy Spirit, proceeding from both, claims the will that proceeds from both memory and reason.[129]

Apart from again showing the importance of 'inhering', this quotation discloses the key role of *memoria* in the view of William of Saint-Thierry. Memory, in itself, contains man's original destination. Memory also refers to the mechanism of remembering. It is treated in *De natura corporis* as such. But this natural meaning is suffused with the more prominent theological meaning just indicated, determining its role in man's return to God. Man in his fallen state cannot just dispose of his memories to re-evoke divine presence at will, as we saw; yet, one must return to memories of past sweetness: 'Through the memories of past benefits we adhere to the Lord, our God […]. The bride must return to the memory of the cellars, that is, she must seek the consolation of scripture.'[130] This last explication is, within William's work, extraordinary in its concreteness. William is normally concerned much less than Richard of Saint-Victor with a conscious building of memory with specific *aides-mémoire* in the form of scripture or other reading matter. In his *Epistola* William suggests that the novice should, for one hour each day, 'recollect the benefits of the redemption and enjoy these sweetly in his conscience and store them in his memory'. This, incidentally, is presented as a form of spiritual communion, incorporating a 'personal' element within a traditional context.[131] He

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[129] *De natura et dignitate amoris* 5: 'cum Trinitas Deus hominem crearet ad imaginem suam, quamdam in eo formavit Trinitatis similitudinem […]. Etenim cum in faciem novi hominis spiraculum vitae, spiritalem vim, id est intellectualem, quod sonat spiratio et spiraculum; et vitalem, id est animalem quod sonat nomen vite infudit, et infundendo creavit; in ejus quasi quadam arce vim memorialem collocavit, ut Creatoris semper potentiam et bonitatem memoraret. Statimque et sine aliquo more interstitio, memoria de se genuit rationem, et memoria et ratio de se protulerunt voluntatem. Memoria quippe habet et continet quo tendendum sit; ratio, quod tendendum sit; voluntas tendit. […] Ut ergo Deo inhereret creata in homine rationalis anima, memoriam sibi vendicavit Pater; rationem Filius; voluntatem ab utraque procedentem ab utroque procedens Spiritus sanctus' (Davy, p. 76, ll. 5–27; PL 184, II, 3, col. 382B–D).

[130] *Expositio* VII, 43: 'Memoria praeteritorum, adhaeremus Domino Deo nostro […] et redeundum ei est ad memoriam cellariorum et uberum; hoc est sicut dictum est, refugiendum ad consolationem scripturarum' (Verdeyen, p. 41, ll. 28–38).

[131] *Epistola* 115: 'Scit etiam quicumque habet sensum Christi quantum christianae pietati expediat, quantum servum Dei, servum redemptionis Christi deceat, et utile ei sit una saltem aliqua diei hora passionis ipsius ac redemptionis attentius recolligere beneficia, ad fruendum suaviter in conscientia et recondendum fideliter in memoria; quod est spiritualiter manducare corpus Domini, et bibere ejus sanguinem' (Déchanet, p. 234, ll. 1–8). On this passage and its possibly implied criticism of the growth of liturgy, endangering ideals of liturgical simplicity, see Pfeifer, 'Wilhelms von Saint-Thierry Goldener Brief', I, 142–146. Compare William's opinion on *manducatio corporalis* and *manducatio spiritualis* in his *De sacramento altaris*, PL 180, cols 341A–366A, and cols 351B–355C.

also recommends that the monk takes something from his daily lecture and 'puts it in the stomach of memory, to ruminate it and to avoid other thoughts'.[132] But the connection between reading and memory is usually much less articulate, as if memory is an autonomous faculty: 'The Bride's memory of the Bridegroom is to seek the Bridegroom in the simplicity of the heart, her understanding is, to sense about him in goodness, her love is, to be affected to just him, to enjoy him, to be as he is himself.'[133] Memory can be infected with worldly images.[134] Through neglect of one's conscience, memory can become sordid, and understanding darkened.[135] Infected with exterior things, memory cannot be affected by God.[136] Once cleansed, however, together with understanding and love, it is the distinguishing feature:

> In this indeed man is made in the image of God, that he by piously remembering God would come to understand him, by humbly understanding come to love him, by ardently and wisely loving come to the affect of enjoying him, and thus exist as a rational being, that is fearing God, and observe his commands, that is the whole man.[137]

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[132] *Epistola* 122: 'Sed et de cotidiana lectione aliquid cotidie in ventrum memoriae demittendum est, quod fidelius digeratur, et sursum revocatum crebrius ruminetur' (Déchanet, p. 240, ll. 1–3).

[133] *Expositio* XVIII, 85: 'Sponsae namque memoria de sponso est in simplicitate cordis quaerere sponsum; intellectus sentire de eo in bonitate; amor ipsi affici, ipso frui, esse sicut ipse est' (Verdeyen, p. 66, ll. 25–28).

[134] *Expositio* XII, 62: 'Per haec enim a temetipsa egrediens abisti a te per affectum in uestigia intentionum multarum, sic ea impressa habens memoriae, ut etiam cum absint corpora, non absint eorum imagines; cum cessent actus, non cessent eorum affectus; cum voces sileant, perstrepant earum significationes' (Verdeyen, p. 51, ll. 55–60).

[135] *Expositio* XXIV, 118: 'Est et aliud languor sponsae in cogitando de sponso, cum ex uitio aliquando neglectae conscientiae, aliunde sordente memoria, hebet intellectus et languet amor' (Verdeyen, p. 85, ll. 155–157).

[136] *Expositio* XXXIII, 152: 'Quod quid aliud est, quam mens et memoria et conscientia per concupiscentiam carnis et oculorum, et ambitionem uitae exterioribus infecta; quae quamdiu sic est, non potest esse Deo affecta?' (Verdeyen, p. 107, ll. 21–24).

[137] *Expositio* XVIII, 84: 'In hoc etenim homo ad imaginem Dei conditus est, ut pie Dei reminiscens, hoc est ad intelligendum humiliter intelligens, hoc est ad amandum ardenter ac sapienter amans, usque ad fruendi affectum animal rationale exsisteret; hoc est *Deum timere et mandata eius obseruare, quod est omnis homo* (Genesis 1. 26–27)' (Verdeyen, p. 65, l. 5 – p. 66, l. 10).

Man on His Own and Self-Knowledge

The loss of unity, the longing for its restoration, and the unquestionable *experientia* of divine sweetness, in one's memory and conscience, are thus offered to the reader as the contours of monastic life. These contours do not distinguish the reader from others in the monastic community. What they mark is a step away from the cosmic coherence as it was guaranteed by the older sacramental view of the world. If this older awe-inspiring view was anything but comforting, the mechanisms and the language behind liturgy and sacraments had remained largely unquestioned. For all William's criticism of contemporary philosophical debates about this language, the old certainties, as William perceived them, were lost. The concomitant of the awareness of a lost unity is a strong sense of being thrown upon one's own resources. There are two sides to this: the miserable self of the Fall, and the self alone with God. 'We have fallen into ourselves', is the recurring complaint: 'We were made well to the image and likeness of our Creator, but we have fallen away from God into ourselves through sin, and from ourselves under ourselves, in such a depth of unlikeness that there would be no hope at all.'[138] A sense of utter insignificance, misery and inadequacy is only part of the stock-in-trade of meditative practice, but here it also strengthens the sense of man on his own: 'The soul, praying to God, is standing there, trembling and stunned, carrying herself always in her hands' (compare Psalm 119. 109).[139] In *De contemplando deo* the more forcefully the narrator/reader strives towards God, the harder he is falling back into himself, and is thereby made to confront a troublesome and loathing question about himself;[140] or he stands in the house of solitude as a wild ass alone by himself (Hosea 8. 9).[141]

In the *Meditations* this notion is further supported by repeated allusions to a lawsuit, resounding Job's cause with God.[142] If it is not a case between the sinner and God, it is the sinner who enters into a case with himself, dicussing who he is, concluding to his awareness of his own misery. 'When I am totally on my own I sit

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[138] *Expositio* XVI, 79: 'Conditi sane ad imaginem et similitudinem creatoris, cecideramus a Deo in nos per peccatum, et a nobis infra nos in tantum profundum dissimilitudinis ut nulla esset spes' (Verdeyen, p. 63, ll. 87–90).

[139] *Meditatio* II, 14: 'Stat igitur oratura Deum suum pauida et stupens anima, semetipsam in manibus suis semper portans, quasi eam tibi oblatura' (Hourlier, p. 62, ll. 1–3).

[140] *De contemplando deo* 4: 'sed quanto tendo fortius, tanto retrudor durius infra in memetipsum, sub me ipso. Sic ergo respiciens et discernens et dijudicans meipsum: factus sum michiipsi de meipso laboriosa et taediosa quaestio' (Hourlier, p. 68, ll. 16–19).

[141] *De contemplando deo* 12: 'Stans igitur in domo solitudinis, quasi onager solitarius, et habitaculum habens in terra salsuginis, et attrahens ventum amoris mei, os meum aperio ad te domine; et attraho spiritum' (Hourlier, p. 114, ll. 55–58).

[142] *Meditatio* V, 17: 'Tecum habeo causam' (Hourlier, p. 104, l. 1).

alone and am silent […] and I am at leisure to be free to myself, and I discuss myself, who I am, from where I come.'[143] Thus William introduces self-inspection, where all the thoughts, desires and feelings are brought to an inner court:

> So great, Lord, is the density and immensity of my misery in me, that I am not capable to look at its parts nor to survey the enormous face of it in its totality. […] Thus it always happens to me, thus the house of my own conscience rejects me from itself […] from your heights I fall into my depths, from you in me, from me, under me, and as the artifice of all my efforts falls apart, like a worthless speck of dust that the wind blowth from the face of the earth (compare Psalm 1. 4), I am made into a plaything of the winds by the phantoms of my thoughts, will, affections, that are as many as the faces of human beings, as the moments of the hours, as the rush or the strike of things or events.[144]

The allusion to Job in the *Meditations* makes for an almost Lutheran existential outcry: 'Hitherto have I come, here I stand, I am not allowed to go further.'[145]

Even in the middle of the process as it is described in the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, being reduced to oneself is a recurring theme, but this self becomes more and more sustained, seeking its solitude. In its introductory chapters William explains how, after the first taste of sweetness, the soul is sent back into the house of her conscience, to be instructed and chastised.[146] Later on in the Commentary as well, when the Bridegroom goes away 'just as the Bride, when she goes out of her mind for God […] gives herself totally in her affect, so once she is sober again, she must get herself together in understanding, and nourish her free mind with the fruit of spiritual knowledge.'[147] Later in the Commentary the tone changes and the bride herself seeks solitude:

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[143] *Meditatio* IV, 7: 'Cumque totus mihi redditus sedeo solus et tacens […] et uaco uacare mihi, discutio meipsum, quis sim, unde sim, unde uenerim' (Hourlier, p. 82, ll. 2–5).

[144] *Meditatio* IX, 1: 'Tanta, Domine, est in me miseriae meae densitas et immensitas, ut nec sufficiam eam per partes dispicere, nec totitatis eius enormem faciem peruidere. […] Sic mihi semper facit, sic a se me reicit domus propria conscientiae meae. […] de altis tuis in profunda mea recido, a te in me, a me subtus me, et resoluta omni conatus mei machina, sicut inane quiddam pulueris proiectum a facie terrae, efficior uentorum ludibrium, per phantasmata cogitationum, uoluntatum, affectionum, tot quot uultus hominum, quot horarum momenta, quot rerum uel euentuum incursus uel occursus' (Hourlier, p. 146, ll. 1–16).

[145] *Meditatio* XI, 8: 'Hucusque ueni, hic sto, procedere non licet' (Hourlier, p. 172, l. 1). Compare Job 38. 11.

[146] *Expositio* III, 9: 'Postmodum uero in domo conscientiae suae remittitur erudienda, castificanda in obedientia caritatis, et perfecte mundanda a uitiis, et perornanda uirtutibus, ut ad spiritualem gratiam pietatis admitti et affectum uirtutum, qui sponsi thalamus est, digna habeatur' (Verdeyen, p. 23, l. 69 – p. 24, l. 73).

[147] *Expositio* VII, 43: 'Sicut enim quae sponsa est, mente excedens Deo *agnumque sequens quocumque ierit* (Revelations 14.14), totam se exhibet in affectu, sic cum sobria fit sibi, totam

> Left on her own after the trance of the first lying together, in which she had been out
> of her mind to God, and on her own, sober again, ruminating the memory of the
> sweetness she tasted, striving for solitude after the digestion of the sacred affects,
> fleeing other people, she loves to sit in the hidden place of her cell, in the solitude of
> her heart, in the recess of her conscience, to apply herself to cleanse her heart,
> concerned to purify her face in a glass darkly, to see face to face.[148]

It is this self, realizing its destination, that is referred to at the outset of the *Epistola*,
when William describes life in the hermit's cell. 'The one with whom God is, is
never less alone than when he is alone. […] Then, in the light of truth, in the quiet of
a clean heart, spontaneously the pure conscience lies open to itself, and freely
memory, affected about God, is immersed in itself.'[149] The cell takes on a
sacramental significance: in it not just the signs, but the reality itself of the
sacraments is celebrated.[150] The emphasis on the intimate togetherness of soul and
God and on introspection distinguishes William's praise of the hermit's cell from
Peter Damian's *laus heremiticae vitae*.[151] Throughout, the soul investigates itself.[152]
Self-knowledge results in the recognition of being the image of God, and, as the
Bridegroom says to the reader/Bride: 'In your mind, if you are with me, there I lie
with you.'[153]

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se colligere debet in intellectu, et spiritualis scientiae fructu mentem pascere feriatam'
(Verdeyen, p. 41, ll. 33–36).

[148] *Expositio* XXXI, 143: 'Reddita ergo sibi sponsa post primum primi accubitus
excessum, quo mente excesserat Deo, et sobria facta sibi, et gustatae suauitatis memoriam
ruminans, post sacrorum affectuum digestionem secretum appetens, fugitans publicum, in
abdito cellae, in solitudine cordis, in recessu conscientiae, sedere amat ad studium cordis
mundandi, in speculo et aenigmate sollicita emundare faciem ad uidendum facie ad faciem'
(Verdeyen, p. 101, ll. 4–10).

[149] *Epistola* 30: 'Cum quo enim Deus est, numquam minus est solus quam cum solus est.
[…] Tunc in luce veritatis, in sereno mundi cordis, ultro patet sibi pura conscientia, et libere
se in se fundit affecta de Deo memoria' (Déchanet, p. 168, ll. 1–7). Compare *Meditatio* IV, 14:
'Non enim ero solus, quandiu tu mecum eris, Deus meus' (Hourlier, p. 88, ll. 2–3).

[150] *Epistola* 36 (Déchanet, p. 172, ll. 1–7).

[151] See chapter 2, pp. 52–55.

[152] *Epistola* 101 (Déchanet, pp. 222–224, ll. 1–7). Apart from God and a spiritual father, as
well as a recommended imaginary patron, as the *custodes* in the cell, one's own *conscientia* is
a *custos*. See *Epistola* 102–103 (Déchanet, p. 224). Compare *Epistola* 215: 'discutit se solus
cum Deo animus' (Déchanet, p. 320, l. 2). It is this original self, that one has to know, as is
explored in the *Expositio* XII, 59–64 (Verdeyen, pp. 49–53).

[153] *Expositio* XII, 60: 'Sed cognosce te, quia imago mea es […] In mente tua si fueris
mecum, ibi cubabo tecum' (Verdeyen, p. 50, ll. 31–32).

The Risk of Living in Vain: Ambiguity or Absolutism

The urgency of the desire for adhesion and unity is commensurate with the intensity of the sense of loss of this unity—a sense of loss to which the reader is often directed as a preparation on the way to the restoration of the *imago Dei*, the unity and the vision of God. The experience of divine sweetness may be comforting, and its descriptions suggest an almost intimate closeness, but the necessity for unity is indeed of enormous proportions, as was implied in the quotations about the Fall of man. Mont-Dieu, the name of the Carthusian community to whom William addressed his *Epistola*, 'is a happy name, because according to the psalm it signals the place where the generation lives of those who seek the face of the God of Jacob, the generation who has not received its soul in vain.' [154] This generation is contrasted with he who does not seek God, and does not have this *cultus Dei*. He 'has received his soul in vain—that is, he lives without effect, *frustra vivit*, or rather he does not live at all, when he does not live the life for which he has received his soul'.[155]

The absolute proportions of divine love, on the one hand, and, on the other, the *frustra vivit*, leave far less room for an acknowledgement of ambivalence or ambiguity than one can find in Hugh of Saint-Victor or Richard of Saint-Victor, both of whom emphasize the middle position of man in the world, as reflected in their view of the ambiguity of a moment. Whereas, in Hugh of Saint-Victor, a pre-lapsarian perspective full of promise was telescoped into the present, for William the contrast seems to be much more striking. One would look in vain in William's work for anything like the satirical exposure of vice posing as virtue which one finds in Bernard of Clairvaux's *De gradibus humilitatis*. At most, ambiguity seems to be much more simple, and has mostly to do with the effect of the reader on his fellows, as suggested when William warns his readers about the possible damage of their behaviour, by incautious humility, or by actually giving an example for somebody's fall, through confession of one's sin or weakness.[156] More generally, temptations seem to have a less important role in William's presentation of the monastic experience. Temptations are mentioned, to be sure, mainly in the *Epistola*, where they were shown to be an instrument of one's self-knowledge. An equivocal note resounds where William explains the truism that temptations that are presenting

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[154] *Epistola* 25: 'scilicet quod sicut psalmus dicit de monte Domini, habitatura sit in eo generatio quaerentium Dominum, quaerentium faciem Dei Jacob, innocens manibus et mundo corde et quae non accepit in vano animam suam' (Déchanet, p. 162, ll. 2–5). Compare Vulgate Psalm 23. 3–6.

[155] *Epistola* 26: 'ipsa est pietas, quae sicut dicit Job, cultus Dei est; quam qui non habet, in vano accepit animam suam, hoc est frustra vivit, vel omnino non vivit, dum non vivit ea vita propter quam ut in ea viveret, accepit animam suam' (Déchanet, p. 164, ll. 6–10).

[156] *Expositio* IX, 47: 'Semper tamen cauere studet pia caritas, ne quemquam laedat incauta eius humilitas, ne confessio reatus uel infirmitatis suae fiat exemplum uel occasio fraternae ruinae' (Verdeyen, p. 43, ll. 6–8).

themselves under the guise of good are much more difficult to discern.[157] In the *Speculum Fidei*, doubt is the more hideous as it does not present itself openly, saying yes or no, but suggesting that maybe things are different than what is written down.[158] Nevertheless, as far as believers are concerned, doubt as a temptation was incorporated in the monastic itinerary. The Canticle text 'Lest I should begin to wander astray after the flock of your companions' (Canticle 1. 6) is made to refer to the *multiplex diversitas* of thought, once the mind of the Bride happens to lessen its concentration on the quest of the only truth,[159] but this danger is nothing compared to the preceding explanation: 'Those who do not err, know how great are the herds which error has acquired for itself, of those who have chosen death for themselves instead of life […] going to hell in flocks.'[160]

In this case, as in the discussions of predestination in the *Speculum fidei*, the explanation serves to draw the boundaries between the inhabitants of the monastery and the outside world. From within the monastery, at least as it is created here for the benefit of the monastic reader, the outside world is irredeemably lost.

The all or nothing contrast underlying monastic life is especially strong in the *Meditativae Orationes*. These meditative prayers often equal the *Meditations* of Anselm in their skilful employment of anxiety and self-abasement, having the reader start his introspection as a first step to the knowledge of God. First, one has to see how a sense of nothingness lurks behind the misery of fallen man:

> Have mercy, hold us, that we do not fall from your hand. Burn our reins and our heart with the fire of your Holy Spirit, and establish what you have worked in us, that we are not destroyed and reduced to the mud we come from, reduced to nothing.[161]

William emphasizes how much life hangs by a thread:

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[157] *Epistola* 80 (Déchanet, p. 206).

[158] *Speculum Fidei* 31: 'Nam etiam ferventiores in religione animos, sed teneriores adhuc in fide, adtemptare saepe solent huius modi de fide temptationes, non occurendo in faciem venientes, sed latenter quasi a latere insidiantes, et quasi vestem fidei a tergo vellicando; non dicentes: *Est, est; non, non*, sed forsitan et forsitan susurrantes; forsitan, inquiunt, sic est; forsitan non est; forsitan aliter fuit, aliter scriptum est, propter aliquid quod scriptum non est' (Déchanet, p. 94, l. 10 – p. 96, l. 17).

[159] *Expositio* XI, 58 (Verdeyen, p. 49, ll. 47–56). The translation of the Canticle-verse is taken from Denys Turner, *Eros and Allegory: Medieval Exegesis of the Song of Songs*, Cistercian Studies Series, 156 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1995), p. 203.

[160] *Expositio* XI, 58: 'Sciunt qui non errant, quantos sibi greges in mundo error fecerit, mortem sibi pro uita eligentium […] gregatim euntium in infernum' (Verdeyen, p. 48, l. 36 – p. 49, l. 40).

[161] *Meditatio* I, 4: 'Miserere, tene nos, ne de manu tua cadamus. Vre renes et cor nostrum igne sancti Spiritus tui, et confirma quod operatus es in nobis ne dissoluamur, et in lutum nostrum, uel in nihilum redigamur'(Hourlier, p. 42, ll. 5–8).

I believe to be blessed, perfectly blessed, Lord, when I feel that you are with me; but I loath myself, and I am an object of hate to myself, as often as I do not feel that I am with you. When I am with you, I am with myself; but I am not with myself, as long as I am not with you. And woe to me, as often as I am not with you, without whom I can never be. Indeed, I could not exist, by whatever way of existing, in body or soul, unless your power is present.[162]

The last meditation of the collection as it was edited by William is heavily infused with the absolute claims of monastic life. In this meditation the narrator/reader is reduced to the limits of his possibilities to argue the love of God, and thus his salvation, from his *affectus*. To conclude this chapter, I shall follow his tormented quest for an answer to his enquiry, whether he has the love of God.[163] His argumentation shows all the tensions that we have discovered before, and is in no way inferior to the 'practical syllogism' of later Protestantism. What it also shows is that, for all the emphasis on the solitary monk, it is only through his fellow lovers of God that he can get the validation he seeks.[164]

After elaborately confessing his sins, William introduces love, by an allusion to the sinner-woman from the gospel: her many sins are forgiven, for she loved much (AV Luke 7. 47),[165] and William appeals to this love (*amor tuus*) as his advocate in his own cause. But, how can he be sure of that advocacy?

It seems to me to be very certain indeed that I always love your love, to the extent that I am affected whenever I am reminded of it or remember it. But when, when I am reminded of you or remember you, I am not moved, not affected, I fear that I may be exposed as not always loving you.[166]

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[162] *Meditatio* II, 2: 'Beatum et beatissimum, Domine, me credo, si sentio te esse mecum, sed taedet me mei, et odio ipse mihi sum, quotiens sentio me non esse tecum. Quandiu sum tecum, sum etiam mecum; non sum autem mecum, quandiu non sum tecum. Et uae mihi, quotienscunque tecum non sum, sine quo nunquam esse possum. Non enim haberem subsistere, quouis modo subsistendi, sive in corpore siue in anima, nisi praesente uirtute tua' (Hourlier, p. 52, ll. 1–8).

[163] *Meditatio* XII, 13: 'Quaero, Domine, utrum habeam amorem tuum' (Hourlier, p. 196, l. 1).

[164] For a more theological reading of this meditation, see Déchanet, especially some of the notes in his edition (for example, p. 197, note 7; p. 205, note 14). If Renevey, in *Language, Self and Love,* sees William as 'Discovering the Self through Love', I would say that William discovers a self through the anxious questioning of his love (see also my note 5 earlier in this chapter).

[165] *Meditatio* XII, 8: 'et aspicies in me […] sicut iudicasti aliquando de peccatrice te amante: Dimittuntur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum' (Hourlier, p. 192, ll. 6–8).

[166] *Meditatio* XII, 9: 'Certissimus quippe mihi esse uideor quod amorem tuum semper amo, intantum ut afficiar quotienscunque de eo uel admoneor uel recordor. De te autem semper cum recordor uel admoneor, et non moueor, non afficior, timeo quia forsitan non semper te amare conuincor' (Hourlier, p. 194, ll. 9–13).

Sometimes the Spirit blows where he wishes, and inspires the grace of God's love, but it is precisely the gratuitous character of this love which does not make it easier and William is not sure at all, or so he pretends, about his own position here:

> I wonder whether I have your love. If I am found to have it, that is the only thing in which my soul rejoices; if not, there is nothing I love, and I hate myself. I feel and I confess that I have the love of your love, in as far as I do not wish to love anything but in that love or because of that love […]. So my conscience […] seems to answer without hesitation about the love of your love.[167]

This is all very well, but one's own feelings, however convincingly present, seem not to be enough:

> About you, whether [my conscience] always loves you, and loves you enough, it hesitates to answer in your judgement. […] If you asked me today what you once asked your blessed apostle, Do you love me, I hesitate to answer: you know that I love you, but I answer gladly and with a secure conscience: you know that I wish to love you.[168]

To establish that once more, William again has recourse to what he can experience: 'Maybe I think that I love your love, because sometimes when I think about you or about that love, then I feel, see, taste it, but you I don't feel, or hardly, I don't see, or hardly, I seldom taste and only a very little.' However, 'when I feel your love sweetly in my affect, when I seek you with the understanding of that very love, I love what I feel, I desire what I seek, and in desiring it I languish and faint away.'[169] Still, this detour via one's own *affectus* does not seem to get anywhere. At this point, trying to know in his meditation what he already has and what he is lacking, the narrator/reader discovers a way to ascend to God.[170] The first thing is to have a great, illuminated and affected will. Well, this will the narrator/reader has, and a greater

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[167] *Meditatio* XII, 13 and 14: 'Quaero, Domine, utrum habeam amorem tuum. Si inuenero me habere, hoc est in quo solo laudatur anima mea, et placet mihi; sin autem odio est mihi, et nihil est quod amem, cum meipsum oderim. Sentio et confiteor habere me amorem amoris tui, in tantum ut omnino nisi in ipso uel propter ipsum nil amare uelim, nec meipsum […] Haec est conscientia mea coram uocata et discussa in lumine ueritatis tuae; intrepide mihi de amore amoris tui uidetur respondere' (Hourlier, p. 196, ll. 1–3; ll. 1–6).

[168] *Meditatio* XII, 14: 'De te autem, utrum semper te amet, et satis amet, respondere trepidat in iudicio tuo. […] Vnde si quaeras hodie a me quod olim a beato apostolo tuo quaerebas: Amas me? respondere trepido: Tu scis quia amo te, sed alacri et secura conscientia respondeo: Tu scis quia uolo amare te' (Hourlier, p. 196, l. 3 – p. 198, l. 11).

[169] *Meditatio* XII, 15: 'Forsitan ideo uideor mihi amare amorem tuum, quia aliquotiens cogitans de te uel de eo, aliquatenus sentio, uideo, sapio eum, te uero non sentio uel uix sentio, non uideo uel uix uideo, rarissime et parcissime sapio. […] Nam cum amorem tuum suauiter sentio affectu, te autem quaero ipsius amoris intellectu, amo quod sentio, desidero quod quaero, et in desirando languens deficio' (Hourlier, p. 198, ll. 2–12).

[170] *Meditatio* XII, 16: 'ordior mihi uiam ascendendi ad te' (Hourlier, p. 198, ll. 1–2).

will he could not have, and he would rather not be than not have this will.[171] A great will, moreover, is normally the definition of love. Although he incidentally denounces those who busy themselves with definitions ('But they who give this definition do not know how to judge the boundaries of your love') William does not decline to start here, granted that this will can be called desire: 'If it is called desire, I don't deny having that. I really desire you. But, as long as my profession appears to me so poor and miserable in front of you, my conscience cannot find any joy.'[172] *Professio* may refer to just conduct, but what resonates is the monastic profession. By involving his conscience in the 'professional' confession of failure as required by monastic tradition, and by invoking this profession in his anxious exploration of his predicament, this confession is charged with a double-layered meaning. Hardly compatible with its humility is the presumption of exclusivity in what follows: 'Who wishes, let him laugh about me, I know what I suffer in this, and I know that nobody can sympathize with me, who has not suffered this himself.'[173] Again, a stock item of monastic profession—traditional tears—are woven into the fabric of a more exclusively personal affair:

> My tears will be my bread day and night, as long as I am told: where is your God? That is, as long as in my soul there is an affect in which my God is not, in his own way; above all love, which should be his seat in me.[174]

This is the moment when William introduces the simple fellow monks, who have become the perfect image, in whom he recognizes the love of God, and it is through their love that he will in the end be reassured about his own:

> The affect by which they loving you enjoy you, can be felt with the perceptible sweetness of some spiritual and divine joy, but as the taste of food cannot be communicated to anyone but who tastes it, so this taste cannot be discussed by reason, nor exposed in words, nor conceived by the senses. It is something divine, a wedding-

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[171] *Meditatio* XII, 19: 'Voluntatem tui uel ad te habeo, qua maiorem habere non possum, et mallem non esse quam eam non habere' (Hourlier, p. 200, ll. 1–2).

[172] *Meditatio* XII, 20: 'Si desiderium uocetur, non renuo. Nam reuera desidero te. Sed quandiu coram te tam pauper, tam misera apparebit professio mea, non potest gaudium habere conscientia mea' (Hourlier, p. 202, ll. 3–6).

[173] *Meditatio* XII, 20: 'Rideat me uel irrideat qui uult; ego scio quid in hoc patior. Et scio quia nullus in hoc mihi compatitur, qui hoc ipsum uel non passus sit, uel non patitur' (Hourlier, p. 202, ll. 6–7).

[174] *Meditatio* XII, 20: 'Mihi uero lacrimae meae panes erunt die ac nocte, quamdiu dicetur mihi: Vbi est Deus tuus? id est quandiu erit in anima mea aliquis affectus, in quo suo modo non sit Deus meus, maxime amor, qui propria eius sedes esse debet in me' (Hourlier, p. 202, ll. 8–12).

gift with which you, God, delight your poor man, that he does not collapse on the way.[175]

At last, William reaches firmer ground: apparently still talking about these fellow monks, he explains how the soul is reformed into the image of the Trinity, because will, understanding, and love, now all come together, when enjoyment, understanding and loving are one. Here William describes these monks as the ones who have realized the *imago Dei* and with whom he wants to be associated: 'These are the ones who love you. If I do not find myself among them, living is loathsome to me.'[176] These are the simple servants in whom, as we saw earlier, nature had returned to its origin, and William recognizes in them his own love: 'When I see them, I am totally affected into the love of your love which has performed this in them, the love which I recognize in them through a certain experience known to those who love.'[177] And now, based on this experience, he can come to the conclusion:

> I thus love them who love you, and very much so, as I love the love with which you are loved, whom I love in them. And if I love them in this way, so that in them and in their natural affect I love nothing but you—as I love that very affect for that reason that it is full of you—but in myself never love my affect unless through it I find myself affected about you, in them whom I love in you, and in myself, whom I want to love only in you, what do I love, if not you? Nothing at all.[178]

With a sigh of relief William decides: 'Thus I have found you, Lord, in my love.'[179] But there is one more unsolved question, as the feeling of this love is not always present:

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[175] *Meditatio* XII, 22: 'Affectus enim quo te amando fruuntur, sensibili quidem suauitate cuiusdam gaudii spiritualis uel diuini potest sentiri, sed sicut sapor cibi cuiuslibet nulli insinuari potest, nisi gustanti, sic sapor ille nec ratione discuti, nec exponi uerbis nec sensibus potest concipi. Diuinum quiddam est et arrha uel pignus spiritus, quo in hac uita pauperem tuum, Deus, laetificas et pascis, ne deficiat in uia' (Hourlier, p. 204, ll. 6–12).

[176] *Meditatio* XII, 25: 'Hi sunt qui te amant. Tales cum uideo, et inter eos me non inuenio, taedet me vivere' (Hourlier, p. 206, ll. 1–2).

[177] *Meditatio* XII, 28: 'Istos cum uideo, in amorem amoris tui qui hoc in eis operatur totus afficior, quem in eis deprehendo certa quadam experientia cognita amantibus' (Hourlier, p. 208, ll. 1–3).

[178] *Meditatio* XII, 28: 'Amo ergo eos quia te amant, et multum amo, sicut amo amorem quo amaris, quem in ipsis amo. Et si eos hoc modo amo, ut in eis et in affectu eorum naturali nil amem nisi te, cum ipsum affectum ob hoc tantum amem, quia plenus est de te, sed in meipso nunquam meum amem affectum, nisi cum ipso affectum me inuenio de te, in eis quos amo in te et in meipso, quem nonnisi in te amare uolo, quid amo nisi te? Nil penitus' (Hourlier, p. 208, ll. 3–10).

[179] *Meditatio* XII, 29: 'Inuenio igitur te, Domine, in amore meo' (Hourlier, p. 210, l. 1).

If only I could always find you. As love is not there unless it loves; however, as there is always this vehement will of you in me, that is a love urging me towards you, why am I not always affected by you? Is love maybe one thing, and the affect of love something else? As far as I see, love is something of nature, but loving you is a matter of grace. The affect is the manifestation of grace, about which the Apostle says: 'the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal' (AV I Corinthians 12. 7).[180]

William tries to counter the tenuous position implied in his conclusion by invoking the certainty of an underlying presence of his love, independent of its manifestation. After his meditative quest, the end comes almost as an anti-climax. It is the familiar sigh, and the role of the *affectus* is incorporated in the dull concession that, in this life, progress and setbacks inevitably alternate:

As long as the body weighs down the soul […] it is inevitable that there is failure and progress for the loving soul; if that affect would not comfort the one, would not contain the other, one would run into all sorts of failure, of which no progress would lift one. […] Thus in the soul of your poor one, God, your love is always there, but hidden as fire under ashes, until it pleases the Spirit who blows where he wishes to manifest it.[181]

For a moment, the *affectus* seemed to break out of the monastic *professio* from which they spring. Only a recourse to the *professio* of progress and failure holds them back.

Conclusion

Even if, for the reader of William of Saint-Thierry's work, the goal is the same as for the readers of Hugh of Saint-Victor and Richard of Saint-Victor—the restoration of the image of God in oneself—William presents his readers with a different approach to this goal. As for Hugh and Richard, this approach is, in part, an 'epistemological' approach. Yet for William knowledge does not proceed from the visible to the invisible, from the data of the senses, via their processing through

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[180] *Meditatio* XII, 29: 'sed utinam semper inueniam. Cum enim amor non sit, nisi amet, semper autem in me uehemens sit uoluntas tui, id est amor urgens me in te, cur non semper afficior de te? Nunquid aliud est amor; aliud ipsius affectus amoris? Vt uideo, amor naturae est, amare te gratiae est; affectus gratiae manifestatio est, de qua dicit Apostolus: Vnicuique datur manifestatio Spiritus ad utilitatem' (Hourlier, p. 210, ll. 1–8).

[181] *Meditatio* XII, 29 and 30: 'Nam quandiu corpus quod corrumpitur aggrauat animam […] necesse est ut animae quantumuis amantis defectus fiat et profectus, quorum alterum nisi consolaretur, alterum contineret iste affectus, in omnimodum rueretur defectum, de quo nullus subleuaret profectus […] Semper ergo in anima pauperis tui, Deus, amor tuus est, sed latens sicut ignis sub cinere, donec Spiritus qui ubi uult spirat, placitum habuerit, sicut et quantum uoluerit illum ad utilitatem manifestare (Hourlier, p. 210, ll. 8–13; ll. 1–4).

imagination and reason, to seeing and understanding. Sense knowledge is not a first step, but offers an analogy for spiritual knowledge. Imagination is not a general step towards knowledge but an instrument in pious imagining of the life of Jesus, as a point of departure for affective identification. From the perspective of the forming of the *homo interior*, what is important is William's strong emphasis on the attainment of a state of receptivity and passivity, of a state of 'being affected'. Thus the *affectus* and the *experientia* of being affected hold a much greater importance in William's writings than in the works of Hugh of Saint-Victor and Richard of Saint-Victor. Compared with Hugh's comprehensive cosmological and historical perspective, Richard shows a certain contraction and a concentration on the reader. However, Richard's exegetical structure holds the reader at one remove from the cogitations and affections that, by following the text, he is trying to achieve. Although William's text aims as much as Hugh's or Richard's to orchestrate the reader's inner life, his emphasis on the *affectus* draws the reader further inside, lending not only an indicative but also an almost autonomous quality to his experience and affect. Through developing an understanding of the text, the reader brings about a sense of divine presence and is released from the process of exegesis. The reader is then left to his *affectus*, and thus, as the meditation just discussed makes clear, to the tormenting question whether he has the *amor* which alone gives meaning to his life.

Eventually, in this meditation, William worked his way through his doubts about whether he loves God or not, even if by the detour of his simple fellow monks. The resulting certainty may be tenuous. One cannot avoid the impression that the subject underlying the self-abasement, presuming access to the divine in his *affectus* and *experientia*, threatens to be absorbed by the tension between the two and to break down under the weight of his affects. In the end, it is William's orchestration of this very threat within the monastic profession which prevents his readers from really collapsing.

Fictions of the Inner Life

The notion of an inner life is as natural as it is elusive, and the inner has many faces. Even within the limited context of eleventh- and twelfth-century religion, while each of the views which I have explored have many concepts in common, they show different aspects and a different emphasis according to the backgrounds of the authors. Nevertheless I will try to synthesize these views, in order to highlight how they fit into the particular culture of eleventh- and twelfth-century monks and canons, and, in doing so, I will also reveal how they were distinct from what was to come thereafter.

For Peter Damian, the inner has to be reclaimed from an outer world. The best way to do this is by strict physical seclusion and by subjugating the body. Yet even his severe physical ascesis has a spiritual meaning: participation in the passion of Christ. Vain thoughts have to be resisted at the very beginning, to make place for useful cogitations. Peter uses metaphors of struggle and the chase. His is a militant piety, in which fragility surfaces as a contrast to divine omnipotence, which absorbs the intimacy of the bedroom of the heavenly king. To evoke the reader's work of self-fashioning he appeals to the image of the painter, but also to that of polishing oneself into a rounded stone. However, this happens only after letting oneself be beaten by the hammer of discipline.

If, in Peter Damian, the final work of art is thus the result of carving out the *homo interior* from a hostile material, in Hugh of Saint-Victor the reader will apply himself to subtly sculpting his inner self. As distinct from Peter's emphasis on the body as an instrument used to participate in the passion, Hugh sees the body as an external way to achieve inner harmony. Hugh does not write in militant terms of a struggle against vain cogitations. His emphasis is not on man's disobedience but on doubt and the multiplicity of desire and thought. Vain thoughts are the manifestation of the unrest of the human heart and, at the same time, the inevitable background for the concentration which, alone, releases one from this unrest. Within the perspective of the cosmos and of history, the reader, involved in the endless dynamic between

distraction or digression and concentration, enters into his own heart. Out of his own interconnected thoughts and feelings, he builds his inner self into the form of an Ark, as modelled by the text he reads. For Peter Damian, the cosmic perspective is there as well, but it is one of awe. Peter appealed to his reader to think about what was there before the world, because the human mind cannot be vacant. Awe is not lacking in Hugh either, but more prominent is the tension between the world to be renounced and the world as sign. Both awe and tension are, if not reconciled, at least absorbed by the poetry of Wisdom running: existence's fragility countered, not by massive omnipotence, but by the figure of *Sapientia*.

Richard of Saint-Victor intensifies the tropological–exegetical tendencies, in which composing the inner man almost entirely consists of the reader's recomposing Richard's exegesis. Hugh developed his hermeneutics of building within a wider cosmological and historical perspective, drawing the world into the reader and also drawing the reader into the world. Richard, with his composition-as-exegesis, represents a 'rétrécissement'—a contraction within the reader. Here also there is a continuous circle of distraction and concentration, and, more articulately, of presumption and despair, but because of this contraction the tension within the circle increases. The endless listings of different grades or steps on a ladder, as evoked in Richard's writings, seem to stretch the circle to the point of breaking, threatening to throw the reader out. They at least make possible a reading in which the reader posits himself outside the text, however eager to achieve a certain state of religious knowing and feeling, by just following the lists as if they contained instructions, rather than by ruminating on the texts and attempting to re-compose and re-enact the text in himself. Still, for the reader who follows Richard's indications about how to read, the exegetical narrative structures the inner process, turned in upon itself: the process of knowledge as guided by the text becomes the site of the inner man, and Richard's exegetical narrative still constitutes a screen between the reader and what he reads himself into. One moment he is king Nebuchadnezzar, the next moment Daniel, one moment the priests carrying the Ark, next the people of Israel, crossing the Jordan.

In William of Saint-Thierry, although his writings are full of biblical language, the screen of exegesis becomes extremely tenuous, and, compared with Richard's constant changing of roles, William's 'drama' is more condensed and amorphous. William also offers his readers an epistemology, but one in which the affects are more important: instead of being a step in a process of (exegetical) thinking, imagination is a step in a process of affective identification. Whereas in Richard, as in Hugh, divine presence made itself felt in the exegetical process, in William it is associated with one's *affectus*—which thus assumes a huge weight, almost absorbing its subject. For all his concessions of uncommunicability and the inadequacy of human language, and the provisional character of the experience of union with God on earth, William's choice of language suggests a direct access to the divine in the *affectus* and the *experientia*. William does not, himself, leave behind the theological setting, and his

affectivity is far from being a spontaneous outburst of feeling. Just like Richard's thinking process, it is guided by the text.

However, William's way of writing at least makes possible a view of *affectus* and *experientia* as what we would call psychological phenomena in their own right. It does open up the possibility of *affectus* breaking out of the monastic context and the neo-Platonic–Augustinian anthropology (which still determines William's interiority) and developing into autonomous psychological notions. This is the reason why William's texts—and for that matter (the ascetic militancy apart) Peter Damian's texts—may seem, at first sight, more accessible to modern readers, appearing as they do to describe 'real feelings', even if they are feelings which one does not share. In interpreting the biblical texts Richard and Hugh are in fact creating new texts (which, without knowledge of their exegetical technique, are no longer accessible); William's (and, to a lesser extent, Peter's) texts, when speaking about affects and feelings, seem more easily comprehensible, if one ignores the conventional–monastic character of these *affectus*.

Yet, William's *affectus* are still very much determined by monastic meaning, and in this respect the same as Richard's 'despair', and orchestrated within the same context as, for instance, Anselm's *Meditations*. Only later do *affectus* as tedium and despair obtain a meaning apart from the monastic setting: if they often still originate in a religious context, they cease to be synonymous with this context. The Speculum-literature which flowered in the later Middle Ages supposes a reader who posits himself or herself opposite the text and will investigate and measure the self in the mirror of the text, rather than enacting the very text within the self. Even if a later writer such as Suso can be said to describe his inner life without taking into consideration the 'I or another hypothetical carrier of the inner life',[1] and even if the *affectus* and imagination will still be subject to 'orchestration' (Ignatius' *Exercitia* are an example, as well as Protestant guides into feelings of sinfulness) they will assume an independent psychological meaning, outside the text. Texts increasingly become instruments in guiding a reading subject.[2] Protestant introspection will centre on the person reading signs of sin and grace in himself—obviously after the model of what one has read—and then *producing* autobiographical texts. In contrast, most of the texts discussed in this book draw the reader into themselves, and become inextricably part of his inner process. Where, in later texts, what is prescribed obviously has to be 'appropriated' by the reader, the texts examined in this book use language not to describe or prescribe, but to perform and to be performed—or one could say to create and re-create—as poets do. They are fictions, necessary to give form to the formless, to avoid being reduced 'to the mud we come from, reduced to nothing'.

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[1] See Georg Misch, *Geschichte der Autobiographie*, 4 vols (Frankfurt am Main: G. Schulte-Bulmke, 1949–1969), IV, p. 218.

[2] Pranger, *The Artificiality of Christianity*, p. 10, and passim. For the gap between the twelfth century and later eras see also Berndt, 'Visio-speculatio-contemplatio', pp. 158–160.

I have presented a reading of these works with the question in mind as to how the reader fashions his inner man. In this respect a comparison with modern literature is tempting, though we must bear in mind that the meaning and role of literature in the twelfth century were very different to the meaning and role literature has assumed in modern life. Monastic literature has a place in a long literary and pedagogical tradition, which did not end when the modern took over. One only has to think of the nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman*. One can also think of Proust's goal to have the reader read his own self. Immediately this comparison, with the twentieth-century masterwork of memory and forgetting, discloses important differences at the same time. Far from intending to explore the unknown regions of the mind or shock his readers into recognition of new experience, the medieval author draws upon and takes advantage of the knowledge of his readers—the common ideas about the soul and about theology—explaining these ideas and exploiting them to make the reader build his *homo interior*. One cannot ignore the shadow of the life to come, whether threatening or consoling, visible on the Romanesque sculptures, as well as present in the theological reflection of the authors concerned. The substratum of Proust's reading is a modern alienated subject who, in the reading process, unravels his feelings and discovers his own self. The twelfth-century reader may be induced to recognize his earthly existence as alienated, being exiled in the *regio dissimilitudinis*. The idea of mimesis, of reconstruction after the archetypical origin, always implies an ultimately unbridgeable distance, which may be exactly the condition for literary achievement in a modern sense.

Yet the twelfth-century monk or canon does not want to explore his inner life and his endlessly nuanced reactions to different situations in the same way as Proust's reader was supposed to do. The monk explores what is there, guided by the texts he reads, to make his composition by eliminating anything which is considered superfluous. His project comes close to Musil's Diotima who would like 'to live as one reads'—by excision of the superfluous, the *Alltägliges*, the daily business of getting on, which is the subject of Woolf or Joyce.

Patterns are not lacking in modern literature, but in the case of the texts with which I have been concerned in this book the pattern is a given: people are supposed to enact a pre-established narrative. The ultimate source for these repeated narratives is scripture. Monastic life, with its endless reading, is 'a process by which the written text of scripture becomes part of each monk's biography'.[3] The reader's life, in its turn, becomes a 'living text', a work of art.

The process, which involves both text and reader and forms part of the monastic way of life, is about evoking and invoking the divine presence. For Peter Damian, God is there where he is learned: in the cell, but in the cell as framed within the world of liturgy. In the language of liturgy, of the *Dominus vobiscum*, in which the

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[3] Ivan Illich, *In the Vineyard of the Text: A Commentary to Hugh's* Didascalicon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 60.

hermit takes part whether he is on his own or not, presence is still undisputed, or at least that is what Peter wishes to defend in his attack on those who question the validity of the grammatical plural. For Hugh, and more so for Richard, it is in discovering the meaning of sacraments and of the biblical texts that the divine may present itself. The ultimate divine unavailability, *Unverfügbarkeit,* is somehow respected by their interpretation and drawn into their exegesis, which can be seen as an attempt 'to take into the word whatever hints at difference between Thou and me'.[4] William of Saint-Thierry attenuates this screen of exegesis. His language is full of yearning for unity, and suggests a direct access, but in fact effects a condensation into an *affectus* which is, as it were, taken literally compared with Richard's, or Anselm's affects which are clothed with exegetical meanings. This accounts for the impression of torment which his language leaves behind. Still confined within the monastic *professio*, but without the lightness which ultimately underpins Anselm's *Meditations*, and not yet set free into what we would call the realm of psychology, his *affectus* has nowhere to go: *hic sto*. At the same time his language announces the anxiety of later medieval devotional literature. William may be compared with Peter Damian when it comes to his attitudes towards philosophical questioning of faith. But he can no longer take shelter in Peter's appeal to the liturgy and cult; on the contrary, he seeks refuge in what his *affectus* show him, and of what he feels in himself, even when William would admit that this feeling is effected by God—the arrow of his prayer 'accompanied by its goal'.[5] It is the monk's cell, in which he is all on his own, be it within the community of others on their own, which takes on a sacramental meaning.

In the end, William's form of piety was more easily accomodated by the laity than that of the Victorines, with its demands of highly technical skills of exegesis. That accomodation could only occur, however, after this piety had been loosened from the strictly monastic–literary context—even if other elements of monastic life such as the praying of the hours, were absorbed by lay religiosity. This development contributed to an emancipation of the religious *affectus* from the monastic world and its theological–exegetical determination, towards a 'laicization' of feeling. This is but part of the story of lay devotion from the twelfth century onwards, which was

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[4] Gerrit Achterberg, 'Verkenning – Gij zijt bijeen met bloem en wind; / een toestand, onbekend; ik wil/ beproeven elk verschil,/ dat zich nog tussen ons bevindt/ over te nemen in het woord;/ tot er in dit verlaten oord/ niets anders is van uw verlies/ dan deze winst, dat ik precies/ de grenzen weet van mijn gemis'; in *Verzamelde Gedichten*, (Amsterdam: Querido, 1988), p. 346. ('Exploration – Thou art at one with bloom and wind / A state to me unknown; / I try to take into the word /Whatever hints / At difference of Thou and me / Until in this forsaken place / Nothing remains of loss of Thee /Than this advance that I precisely know / What are the boundaries of my need.')

[5] Compare Paul Celan: 'Jeden pfeil, den du losschickst, / Begleitet das mitgeschossene Ziel / Ins unbeirrbar-geheime Gewühl'; from *Fadensonnen*, in Paul Celan, *Gedichte in zwei Bände*, 2 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), II, 164.

also characterized by, for example, its veneration of the Eucharist, the administration of which was in the hands of priests. If certain forms of inwardness were, from the late twelfth century and beyond, propagated among the laity by the obligation of confession,[6] the specific form of inwardness which we have explored in this book may well have been a distinctive mark of the 'religious specialists' of the period, who, through their writings, gave the most articulate and elaborate expression to the widely felt desire for a personal religious experience.

These specialists, moreover, constituted the intended public of the works considered here. This is another difference between these writings and modern literature. The treatises studied in this book were meant for a well-defined public. Little as we may know about their actual reception and their success in effecting the forming of the person, this intended public (primarily the fellow monks or canons of the author or the inhabitants of some other monastery) was constantly on the mind of the author in a way that readers are not on the mind of a modern author. Although most of the treatises seem to address readers as individuals having to form and re-form their lives, these readers were part of their communities: the hermits of Fonte Avellana, the monks of Monte Cassino and other monasteries, the canons of Saint-Victor and the monks of Saint-Thierry, Signy, or Mont-Dieu, and, of course, of all the communities where the works of these authors were read. This is not the place to elaborate on the differences between these communities, but obviously the differences in perspective can partly be reduced to the differences between eleventh-century hermits living away from towns, Parisian canons living through a time of exciting learning possibilities and monks suspicious of philosophical novelties. Whatever their differences, the authors discussed here were widely read, and not only in their own communities. What they have in common is the focus on the inner, making their communities into communities of *homines interiores*.[7] This inwardness may well have contributed to their communal identity, as far as it constituted a shared but individual devotional itinerary which set them apart from the rest of the world. At a time when the boundaries between laity and clergy became increasingly important, their specific notion of inwardness was a distinctive mark, reflecting the superiority which the clergy claimed for exercising their function in society—and a mark which monks like William of Saint-Thierry invoked in order to withdraw from society.[8] At the same time, the inward turn may also have been

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[6] See Schmitt, "'La découverte de l'individu'".

[7] I am indebted to Constant Mews, in a private communication, for this notion of 'communities of *homines interiores'*.

[8] Another element in the perception of the clergy of their spiritual superiority can be found in saints' lives. In saints' lives written in Anjou at the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries spiritual superiority is often based on the saint's combination of action and contemplation. H. B. Teunis has shown how this claim of superiority contributes to legitimatize and support the role of religious communities in their dealings with the laity. See H. B. Teunis, *Anjou 1050–1125: Heersers en Heiligen in de Middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam: De

a distant reflection of what R. I. Moore has called the treacherous and precarious lot of the clergy, even if he refers to clergy in the world.[9] *Une forte vie intérieure se suffit à elle-même* (A strong inner life is sufficient in itself), as Céline's hero tells himself. In Peter Damian it supported the external marks of distinction. In Hugh of Saint-Victor it underpinned a more optimistic ideal of *paideia*, while from this point of view the contraction in Richard which I discussed earlier may reflect an initial step towards a more inward looking tendency of the community in the second half of the twelfth century, comparable to the sheltered community of William's monastery.

Even within the shelter of their communities, the views of the inner life presented here were part of the period's dynamic explorations of the self—whether the self in relation to God or in relation to other men or the world, as in secular literature. It has often been observed that, at the end of the twelfth century, this dynamic dies away.[10] Apart from the change in dynamics, developments in the use of texts influenced their afterlife. Much of the thought about the stages of the religious life developed by the four authors discussed in this book would later be repeated in a rather mechanical way, indicating linear stages of development, rather than recurring aspects of life in the monastery. This is not to say that there was a clear-cut division: there were many works from the twelfth century that seem to be rather routine applications of exegetical principles or of architectural metaphors. Similarly, there would be later works which continued to assume the sort of ruminating reading which lies at the heart of the writings discussed in this book. Nonetheless, the 'instrumental' way of writing and reading became more and more dominant, serving a reader who had moved out of the context in which (albeit in their different ways) eleventh- and twelfth-century monks and canons had read. Rather than being the performer of the text, the devotional reader became a subject, using the text as an object to achieve his or (increasingly) her religious aim. This is not to deny the often dramatic character of later devotion. Nothing could be more dramatic than the late medieval devotion for the Passion. Take Suso imagining Mary's suffering at the grave of her son and, thinking it time for her to return home, accompanying her in contemplation, while making three *veniae* in his heart.[11] This is, however, an act of imagination where the

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Bataafsche Leeuw, 1986); see also Teunis' forthcoming work entitled *Het beroep op de oorspronkelijke status: Competitie en concordia in Anjou in de elfde eeuw.*

[9] R. I. Moore, *The First European Revolution, c. 970–1215* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 141.

[10] See for example Walter Haug in 'Die Entdeckung der personalen Liebe und der Beginn der fiktionalen Literatur', in *Aufbruch-Wandel-Erneuerung. Beiträge zur "Renaissance" des 12. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Georg Wieland, 9. Blaubeurer Symposium vom 9. bis 11. Oktober 1992 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1995), pp. 65–85 (p. 84). Compare, in a somewhat different sense, Southern, 'Medieval Humanism', p. 48.

[11] *Leben Seuses*, ch. XIII, in *Heinrich Seuse. Deutsche Schriften*, ed. by Karl Bihlmeyer (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1907, Unveränderter Nachdruck Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1961), p. 36.

imagining subject is distinct from the content of his imagination, rather than an act of retracing inwardly a biblical story. If this imaginative activity originated in the twelfth century, in the work of Bernard of Clairvaux, William of Saint-Thierry and others, it left its origins behind in its scope and its independence vis-à-vis the 'poetics of monasticism' which, in one way or another, had governed the work of these authors.[12] The reader moved the anchor for his *affectus* from the text to his own 'experience'.

The increasing variety of contexts in which later devotion flourished (in Suso's case German, Dominican) is *ein zu weites Feld*—too big a subject in itself, let alone within this conclusion. In the later periods, the authors discussed here continued to be read.[13] Remarkable in their later reception, given the often stated dichotomy between a more speculative–intellectual and a more affective religiosity, is the combination of works used in religious pedagogy.[14] The reading of the works discussed in this book was accomodated to these later times. Thus Richard's works could be seen as a system of contemplation and mysticism, even when the emphasis shifted to the affective moment in contemplation.[15] In the later reception of Hugh's works, his cosmological and historical perspective was neglected and works like *De Arrha Animae* were more popular than his 'theological' writings.

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[12] Pranger, *The Artificiality of Christianity*.

[13] See the Introductions to the editions of the works discussed for their later dissemination. For Hugh of Saint-Victor see Rudolf Goy, *Die Überlieferung der Werke Hugos von St. Viktor. Ein Beitrag zur Kommunikationsgeschichte des Mittelalters*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, 14 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1976). See in general on the later reception of twelfth-century works Constable, 'Twelfth-Century Spirituality and the Late Middle Ages'. For a good example of how texts from the eleventh and twelfth centuries could be read and adjusted in later ages, see Benedicta Ward, 'Inward Feeling and Deep Thinking': The *Prayers* and *Meditations* of St Anselm Revisited', *Anselm Studies: An Occasional Journal*, 1 (1983), 177–184: Ward reveals how an English translation or adaptation of Anselm's *Prayers* in a manuscript from the fourteenth century, 'A Talking of the Love of God', shows the transition from 'ascetic' to 'mystical' prayer (p. 179), where the emphasis is on personal emotion *per se*, whilst, in Anselm, the use of emotion was subservient to the themes of theological and scriptural reality (p. 182).

[14] See Bert Roest, 'Franciscan Educational Perspectives: Reworking Monastic Traditions', in *Medieval Monastic Education*, ed. by George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 168–181: aside from the Bible, the major sources for authors such as David of Augsburg were William of Saint-Thierry's *Epistola*, the spiritual writings of Bernard of Clairvaux, and Hugh of Saint-Victor's *De institutione* (p. 172).

[15] Alastair Minnis, 'Affection and Imagination in "The Cloud of Unknowing" and Hilton's "Scale of Perfection"', *Traditio*, 39 (1983), 323–266 (p. 327–331). The emphasis on the *affectus* seems to lead to a burdensome exclusivity comparable with what I have analysed in William of Saint-Thierry.

In a still later period, that of Renaissance and Reformation, the 'topography of interiority' would be expanded with layers of unknowability.[16] Nor would this be the end of the inner man's development. Even when the authors studied here quote biblical texts and declare the inscrutability of the human heart, they seem to refer to the endlessness of thoughts rather than to their unknowability. Their ideal is that of *concordia* or *simplicitas*: an inner brought to the surface and made transparent.

The concomitant idea of controlling life or the affections may have lost its charm, and (long before the present century) may have come to be seen as not only a presumptuous undertaking, but also evidence of a lack of authenticity or sincerity.[17] Modern times can be seen as cultivating the 'ideal of life as unfixed and improvisational' (where formerly the aim was 'to emulate certain carefully chosen models of the purposeful life'), [18] or, alternatively, as developing ever more diversified 'technologies of the self'. The work and the ideas of authors discussed in this book may belong to a culture and a time irretrievably lost. Yet from within the complexities of that culture can one still see the fragility of a single leaf in the winterly cold, or Wisdom running, and withdrawing itself while showing itself, or the hand of the archer knowing that the arrow has not gone in vain.

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[16] John Martin, 'Inventing Sincerity, Refashioning Prudence: The Discovery of the Individual in Renaissance Europe', *American Historical Review*, 102 (1997), 1309–1341 (p. 1321).

[17] See William J. Bouwsma, 'The Two Faces of Humanism. Stoicism and Augustinianism in Renaissance Thought' in William J. Bouwsma, *A Usable Past: Essays in European Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 19–73 (p. 47, referring to Melanchton).

[18] Andrew Delbanco, 'Night Vision. Review of *The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent: Selected Essays by Lionel Trilling*', *New York Review of Books*, 11 January 2001, p. 40.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CCSL: Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954–)

CCCM: Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Medievalis (Turnhout: Brepols, 1966–)

CSEL: Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1866–)

PL: *Patrologiae cursus completus ... Series Latina*, ed. by J. P. Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1841–1864)

SAO: S. *Anselmi Cantuarensi Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, ed. by Franciscus Salesius Schmitt, 6 vols (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1968, facsimile reprint of the first edn, Seckau, Rome, Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1938–1961)

SBO: *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. by J. Leclercq, C. H. Talbot, H. M. Rochais, 8 vols (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957–1977)

SC: Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1941–)

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